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FOCUS



RAPE

Lord Hailsham's criticism of Judge Bertrand Richards' decision to fine rather than imprison a rapist at the beginning of January could be taken to mark a change in judicial attitudes concerning rape. After all it was Hailsham in 1975 who held that it was possible to acquit a man if he held the idea, no matter how unreasonably, that the woman he was raping was really consenting. Judge Richards saw himself as secure within this kind of understanding — the woman was hitch hiking, she therefore 'contributed' to the crime, therefore the man was scarcely culpable. There are many ways a woman can be 'asking for it', he reasoned, or giving the impression she is.

Yet a variety of hardly the most progressive public figures have ranged up against him. Even Margaret Thatcher, who has resolutely denied any commitment or concern for women's position in society, is reported to be angry about the decision and demanding that 'women should have confidence in the ability of the law to protect them against this violent, detestable and odious crime.'

Confidence in the law means more than expecting punitive judicial decisions. The vast majority of rape crimes go unreported

— some put the figure at only one in twenty being reported — and a major reason for this is police treatment of women who make complaints of rape. An aptly timed BBC documentary on the police allowed us to witness the extreme brutality of police officers towards a woman who was alleging rape. She was treated as a criminal, and harassed by questions such as are you menstruating properly, how many men have you had sex with, are you on the game? The woman was forced into defending herself by asserting that she loved her boyfriend and knew the difference between love and sex. Attempting to prove she was not wasting police time, she described how she never called the police when her husband used to beat her up. Eventually she was to be met with Brian Kirk, one of the police officers, shouting at her that 'the story that you have told us is a fairytale...the biggest load of bollocks I've ever heard.'

His clear delight when the woman chose to drop the complaint, having been faced with the choice of prolonging the ordeal of questioning or escaping from the police station, was obscene. His task of protecting men in their violence towards women accomplished, he left the room beaming. The woman and the cameras remained,

while she told the sound recordist that the rape had occurred and that she still wanted to prove it.

At the same time as the TV programme was broadcast, Thames Valley Chief Constable, John Reddington, told the press that a new special unit of women police officers was to be set up to deal with rape complaints. Embarrassed by the programme, he insisted the plans for a new unit had been under way for a time. The Rape Crisis Centre, which has been inundated by calls from women horrified by the Ipswich decision and the documentary, want to see a complete reform of the law on rape so that the woman does not have to depend on the police making prosecutions. They also want to see the initial interview by police kept as short as possible, recognising that after a woman has been raped, she is likely to have few defences against aggressive questioning.

There has been unprecedented media coverage of recent rape cases, with editorials universally condemning Judge Richard's ruling, ranging from the *Telegraph*: 'Whatever the nature of her decision to hitch, it seems extraordinary that her action should be taken to mitigate the offence of the man who raped her' to the *Mirror*: 'Any woman, virgin or prostitute, has the right to the full

protection of the law against the assault of rape.' This suggests that inroads have been made into the prevailing ideology concerning sexual violence against women. Perhaps explanations of rape as traceable to the uncontrollable nature of male desires in the face of women's flaunting of their sexuality, are finally being challenged. Perhaps women's anger at the time of the Ripper murders, the repeated words and actions of women determined not only to defend themselves from attack, but to insist that rape is about violence and not sex, have had effect.

Although to avoid despair it is important to recognise changes, particularly those effected by women's struggle, it is also crucial to have a measure of the enormity of the problem. Notions of male sexuality as aggressive and female sexuality as submissive are deeply ingrained. Protective exhibited by men towards (their) women does not necessarily question this. Outrage expressed about rape can serve to disassociate those men from the rapists — the issue become less about male misogyny and more about particular brutal men. The fact that what statistics are available show the vast majority of rapes as perpetrated by men known to the woman, is a stark reminder that these are men in our midst, in our lives, as well as marauding strangers.

As the moving and horrifying account in the *Sunday Times* (Jan 10) by a woman who was raped reveals, in male eyes, women who are raped can have an aversion to sex as much as being wanton. The doctor who examined her wanted to know why she hadn't made greater efforts to be unfaithful to her unfaithful husband. 'Here was a new twist to male assumptions about rape victims, they were not scarlet women after all, but frigid little snowflakes.'

Men, whether judges, newspaper editors, or husbands showing distress at the crime of rape, should not serve to mask the crime as an individualised assault, which does not reflect male female relations in general. Nor should determination to protect women cover over implicit assumptions of women's over or under-sexed nature provoking irrepressible male urges. As the woman who wrote in the *Sunday Times* pointed out: 'Rape is about violence and a very special sort of violence, the sort which has its roots in male inadequacy. . . and manifests itself in a hatred of women.'

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

Research in the social sciences is in trouble both in Britain and in the United States. Early in 1981 David Stockman, President

Reagan's budget director, cut government funding for the social sciences by 75%, while in the last month in Britain Sir Keith Joseph has both cut the budget of the Social Science Research Council by £1.1m, and set up an enquiry by Lord Rothschild into the very need for the SSRC to exist. In both countries, conservative politicians have disparaged social research and questioned whether the state should fund research which may undermine the state or, probably a more pressing danger to them, expose the consequences of government policies. Meanwhile in France the Mitterrand government has just held a conference of 2000 researchers to discuss a substantial expansion of French research, in the social as well as the natural sciences.

The SSRC has always been the most controversial of the research councils which provide funds for academic research in Britain. Like the other research councils, the biggest of which is the Science and Engineering Research Council, it divides its funds between support for the research work of academics, paying for research assistants or equipment, and support for postgraduate students as they undertake PhD or Master's courses. Set up in the 1960s as a contribution to the economic regeneration of Britain, it has always spent much of its budget on such fields as economic management, planning, industrial relations and educational research, but it is also responsible for the 'purer' social sciences, psychology, politics, sociology, human geography and economic and social history.

With this wide responsibility the SSRC can be, and has often been, criticised at the same time for being too pure and too applied, for funding research in obscure areas of social anthropology, for pretending to rigour in such fields as industrial relations and, in a combination of the two attacks, for fostering revolution by teaching theoretical sociology.

Much of this criticism is pure philistinism, made easier by the fact that the jargon of the social sciences seems easy to understand and is easy to caricature. Many social scientists must wish that, like the doctors, the biologists or the mathematicians, their jargon and thus the titles of their research work were incomprehensible to anyone without a degree in the subject. As it is, every list of social science research topics produces guffaws from the *Daily Telegraph* or, in the United States, the 'golden fleece' award given monthly by an American senator to the activity which has been the most ludicrous use of public funds. The social sciences deal with topics which we all think we understand; they thus do not have the

aura of respectability and profound knowledge which surrounds science, mathematics or the humanities and which seems to deter critics.

More serious for the SSRC, at least until the recent political attacks, has been the failure of social scientists to agree about how their work should be organised and about whether it should try to be useful, to contribute to policy-making. Early in its life, the SSRC pursued academic respectability; its structure paralleled the traditional academic divisions between subjects, it fought shy of taking initiatives and commissioning research, and much of its effort went into the training of research students to staff the new social science departments set up in the polytechnics and universities in the 1960s and 1970s. Gradually, however, partly under pressure from successive governments and from the other research councils, the emphasis has changed. After an earlier report from Lord Rothschild, more attempt was made to get research under way which would be directly relevant to the needs of policy-makers. The SSRC began to commission and initiate research — for example in race relations and in socio-legal studies — and to encourage research which cut across traditional subject divisions. At the moment, in the culmination of this process, the present chairman, Michael Posner, is reorganising its work to concentrate on 'problems that are seen to be important in national and international affairs'.

Social scientists are deeply divided about these changes. Many sociologists think that they represent a capitulation to the state and to relevance at the expense of the pursuit of knowledge; many economists think that the changes merely recognise reality and are a sensible organisation of resources towards the problems that really matter. Everyone realises, however, the danger that some outside body will choose the research which it thinks is important and deny funds to research which may produce inconvenient results.

This is the spectre which is raised by Sir Keith Joseph's actions; the cut in the SSRC budget is not for financial reasons, for £1.1m, though substantial in the SSRC's funds of £20m, is a drop in the ocean of the £400m allocated to the research councils. It has, in any case, been reallocated by Sir Keith to the natural sciences. The Rothschild enquiry is seen by Joseph, as letters to and from Sir Geoffrey Howe which were leaked to *New Society* make clear, as a preliminary either to winding up the SSRC or to forcing it to become a client of the government, paid only to do the research that government wants.

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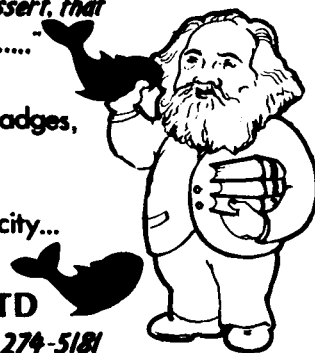
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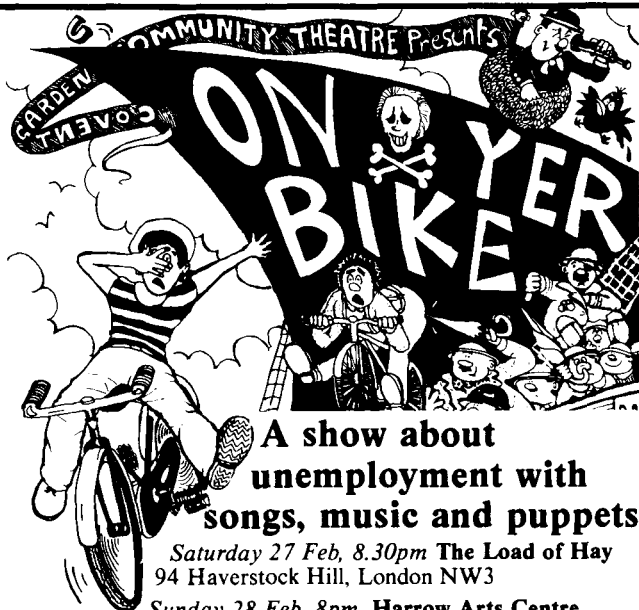
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Winding up the SSRC is probably impossible, whatever Tory backbenchers might like; someone has to give grants to research students and fund academic research, unless research in the social sciences is to cease altogether — the universities are in no condition to pick up the bill. But there is a considerable danger that the 'pure' social sciences — anthropology or economic history, for example — might be separated from the rest and financed inadequately through an organisation like the British Academy, as are the humanities at the moment. This would leave the more contentious subjects — economics, sociology, management and industrial relations — in a revamped SSRC dependent upon government grants or private contracts for specific research projects and thus subject to the whims of government departments and ministers.

In such circumstances, free enquiry, which is expensive in these subjects, would be impossible. 'Academic freedom' is easily abused as a rallying cry, but in the social sciences academic freedom is very close to political freedom. That is why the SSRC must be defended.

PCF CONGRESS

If there are different roads to socialism, there are also different ways of holding a Communist Party Congress. In France, the party congress is traditionally an affirmation and refinement of a political statement drawn up by the party leadership, a warm display of comradeship and a grand republican ritual.

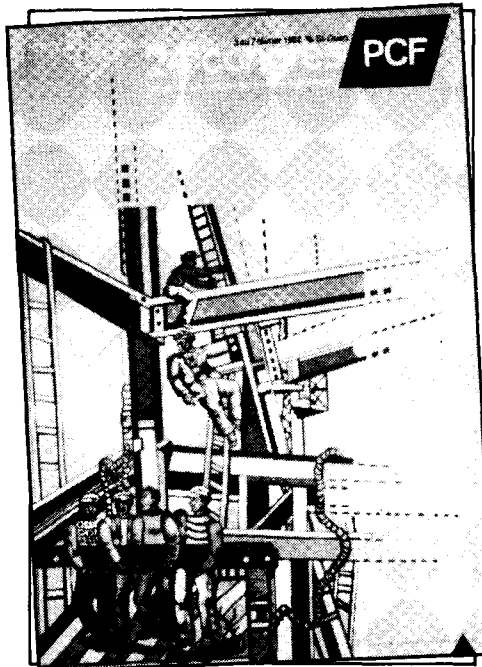
The 24th PCF Congress, held last month in the vast hall of the Sports Palace of St. Ouen, was all of these things. But there were innovations. Once or twice the chair invited delegates to have their spontaneous say through a mobile microphone. And, on one occasion, a known critic of a crucial aspect of current party policy was invited to the platform to put his minority point of view. The secretary general led the polite clapping after the critic had had his say, and the television cameras all moved into action.

The Congress was held at a time when the PCF faces perplexing problems. Deserted by more than a million of its voters in last year's presidential and parliamentary elections, it finds itself as the junior partner in a left government which owes its existence to the 4,500,000 Communist votes which were enthusiastically given to Francois Mitterand in the second round of the presidential poll.

The resolution before the Congress (which was passed with minor amendments by 2,000-odd votes to none, with two or three abstentions set the party the task of

rebuilding its influence after last year's serious reverse.

During the five days of debate, the two interlocking strands of present party activity — as an energetic and loyal partner in the government, and as a campaigning force for



the full implementation of its programme of reform — were explained and discussed. The measured speech of Charles Fiterman, the senior Communist minister (and by all accounts an impressively able minister) was one of the most interesting in developing this theme.

The long period of exclusion from power had had a dual effect on party members, Fiterman said. 'If it developed their qualities as Communists, it can also have anchored them in certain reflexes, certain habits.' They had often appeared to be opposed to everything, but now they had to take on the task of construction.

Fiterman, like other party leaders, emphasised that change in France had to be brought about at the pace accepted by the majority, although that was a slower pace than the Communists had themselves proposed to the electorate.

What the Congress did *not* do was to attempt any real analysis of the complex governmental experience — unique in Western Europe in the alliance of Socialists and Communists — now taking place in France. In a remarkable display of Marxist self-denial, the question was kept at the level of the simplest generalisation. In his closing speech, secretary general Georges Marchais said that since the formation of the government, 'positive measures have been taken. Important reforms have been implemented

or begun. Of course, we have not solved all the problems. But I can say, I think, that the Government and the majority are on the right lines. They haven't worked badly.'

While the Government 'hadn't worked badly', the PCF was at the same time giving it and the employers notice that the party would support industrial action (like that for the imposition of the shorter working week without loss of pay) to help the Government work better.

An issue which has led to the departure (or the demoralisation) of many active party members over the past four or five years has been the PCF's policy from 1977-81, from the period of the break-up of the Union of the Left to the eve of the last presidential election.

The congress resolution argued, in rejecting criticism, that this period had not been a 'sectarian parenthesis' in the history of the party. Instead, the reasons for the dramatic loss of votes had to be sought in the PCF's slowness to develop a theory of 'Socialism in the colours of France' after 1956, and in the Common Programme strategy which had blurred differences between Communists and Socialists to the advantage of the Socialist Party.

However, the fundamental criticism of party policy in the period preceding the 1981 presidential election was heard at the Congress from a lone delegate, Daniel Garipuy, who had exceptionally been chosen as a delegate by his district conference although he was a known exponent of the minority point of view.

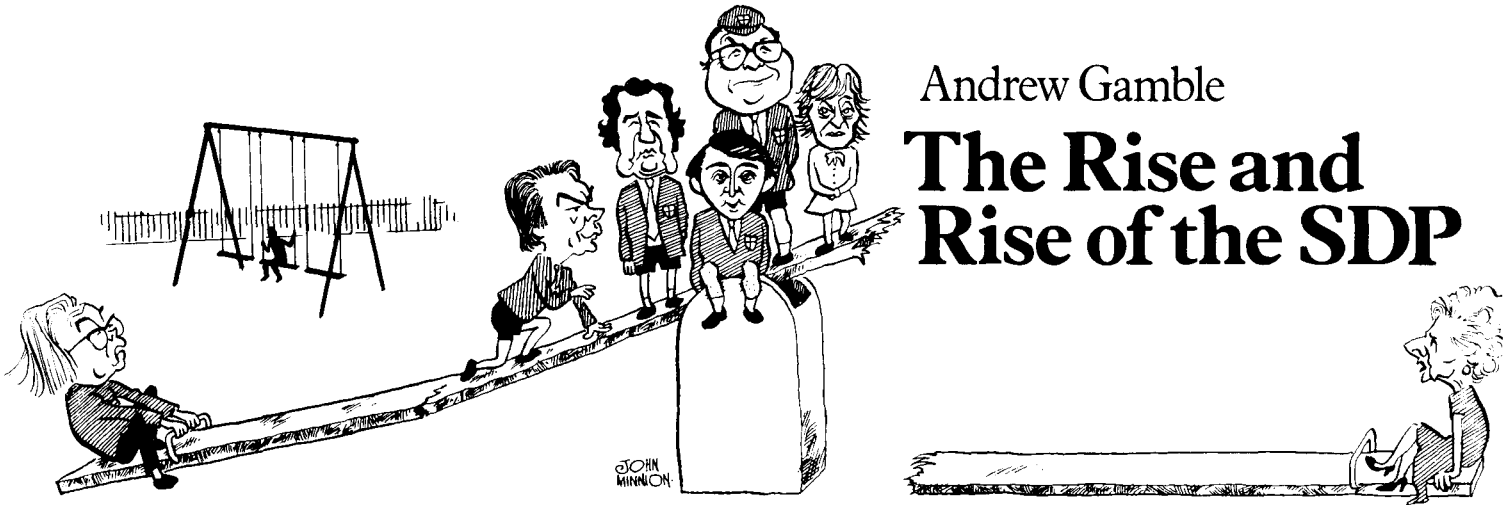
Garipuy argued that it had been a 'grave political error' in the pre-election period to have moved from denouncing the 'turn to the right' in the Socialist Party to presenting that party as a bourgeois party.

'Worried by the stagnation of our influence and the progress of the Socialist Party' said Garipuy, 'we behaved as if we did not wish to win the Socialist Party to the policy of change, but on the contrary to place it definitively on the right.'

And Garipuy pointed out that the Socialist Party programme now being implemented with the participation of Communist ministers was more or less the same programme that had been denounced by the PCF up to the eve of the first round of the presidential election as right-inspired and in many respects worse than Giscard's programme.

No doubt experience will require a return to the discussion of this issue at some time in the future.

Contributors: Eileen Phillips, Roderick Floud, Peter Avis



Andrew Gamble The Rise and Rise of the SDP

The SDP is no flash in the pan. It has already changed the face of British politics. But what is it and where is it going?

The SDP as everyone knows has been breaking records. It has begun to clear the hurdles which have halted the progress of most third parties in the past, becoming in the process far mightier than its creators. Would Shirley Williams have won Crosby for example if she had been attempting to get back into Parliament as the Labour candidate? Callaghan once dismissed talk of centre parties as 'mere fluff' and many of its opponents still believe that something so unnatural and nebulous can have no serious future. They would like the new party to adopt the bubble as its emblem. SDP support they think will melt away as quickly as it has come.

The main basis for this belief is that, as Chris Husbonds has demonstrated so clearly¹, the vote for the SDP is less a positive vote for the new party, its policies, and its leaders, and more a vote against both the other parties — their record, their leaders, and their mode of operation. But even if this remains true, and the SDP support proves as volatile as support for the other parties has become, this should give little comfort to the Labour Party. For the Labour Party would still need to ask why it is that this negative vote on every occasion that it has appeared should have been at the expense not only of an unpopular Conservative government but also at the expense of the Labour opposition. In periods of Labour government the unpopularity of the government has benefitted the main opposition party — the Conservatives. It is a remarkable paradox of the last twenty years that despite all the fiascos of its years in office Labour has often found it harder to maintain and rebuild support when it is in opposition than when it is in government.

Much of the comment on the SDP has naturally concentrated on the impact it has had on the Labour Party. It is bad enough that the major opposition party should fail to benefit from the record of the most unpopular Prime Minister and the most unpopular government since the war, a government which has presided over a doubling of unemployment to three million, an unprecedented slump in manufacturing output, and serious urban riots. It is even worse that it too should be losing support to a third party, and almost in the same proportions as the Conservatives.

The conspiracy theory

The most complacent and ill-founded response on the Left is to dismiss the SDP as a media creation, a conspiracy against Labour

designed to avert the danger of the election of a Left Labour government. The Alliance plan to introduce proportional representation is seen as a device to exclude Labour from government permanently. As the old Labour adage puts it 'When the gentlemen of England are losing the game, they change the rules'. The implication of this view is that the SDP represents nothing of importance and that its support is therefore ephemeral. Sooner or later support for Labour will come flooding back; the conspiracy will fail. Behind this notion lies the optimistic faith that nothing can stop forever the advance of Labour and socialism, because politics in Britain is centred around class and the fundamental conflict between capital and labour. It is unthinkable that politics could be organised around anything else.

Such complacency finds little support in recent historical and theoretical analyses of the political position and political prospects of the labour movement. Two major themes in such analyses have been firstly the reasons for the failure of the Labour movement to continue the political advance it achieved in the first half of this century, and secondly the nature of the class stalemate that has prevented governments of any party successfully countering Britain's relative economic decline. The analyses are to some extent complementary, but they differ in their estimate of what is most important. One analyses the problems of Labour from the standpoint of the organisation and representation of interests, the other from the constraints on the formulation and implementation of policy.

FORWARD MARCH HALTED

The first argument has been advanced most forcefully by Eric Hobsbawm². Labour's forward march has been halted, primarily because the movement has not adapted successfully to major historical changes that have occurred in the composition of the working class and the organisation of British capitalism. These changes have in certain respects increased the organisational strength and the militancy of the trade unions, but there has been no corresponding increase in the political capacity of the labour movement. Indeed Hobsbawm identifies popular resentment of wage militancy and union power as a major factor in explaining why support for the Labour Party has declined. The party has failed both to win votes from the one third of manual workers who have never identified with

the party of their class, and to win sufficient votes from new white collar and professional groups to offset the losses caused by the shrinking proportion of manual workers in the whole working class. The establishment of the SDP represents from this perspective a further stage in the political decline of the labour movement since it means the loss of an important section of the professional and white collar workers from Labour's coalition, a section which formerly looked to Labour and must be won for Labour again if the forward march of labour is to be resumed. Labour risks becoming a trade union party rather than a broad 'people's party' with which all those who want reforms and progressive change can identify.

The stalemate view

The second perspective does not dispute the current political weakness of the labour movement, but argues that it is largely the result of

The most complacent and ill-founded response on the Left is to dismiss the SDP as a media creation

the stalemate between capital and labour which the earlier political and industrial advances of the labour movement created¹. Labour's failure to make further political advances is paralleled by the failure of capital to reverse the gains embodied in the post-war settlement. The countervailing power which each class has been able to exercise has prevented a government of any party from tackling or successfully overcoming the relative economic decline of the British economy. This failure has caused a polarisation in both major parties and the drawing up of increasingly radical programmes. But neither party in government has yet succeeded in implementing its programme or in permanently altering the balance of class forces which that would entail. One indication of how deadlocked this situation has become is that government has changed hands four times in the last twenty years. The rise of the SDP is explained from this perspective as a direct result of the latest failure — that of the Thatcher government. Thatcher's policies have not worked as they were intended to and the Government has lost considerable support, but the increasing polarisation between the two main parties has not been matched by a similar polarisation in the electorate. Fear of a protracted and possibly unresolved conflict between the two class parties has prompted a flight of electoral support to a third force which promises non-ideological policies and is not connected with either organised labour or organised capital. But even if this were to result in an Alliance government, the class stalemate would remain and an Alliance government would be no better equipped to deal with it. Once entrusted with responsibility for policy the hollowness of the SDP's 'rational' alternative would be quickly exposed, and the government might collapse. Then polarisation might begin in earnest, leading fairly quickly to a decisive trial of strength.

Different conclusions can be drawn from these perspectives for the future of the political system. The pessimistic conclusion is that if Labour cannot rebuild its popular coalition, then the rise of the SDP could signal a major change in the axis of the political system, the disappearance of class as the major basis of political alignment, and the banishing of socialist ideas and socialist politics to the sidelines. The optimistic conclusion argues that even if in the short run Labour loses ground to the SDP, the introduction of PR and the destruction of Labourism will present a major opportunity for the development of a mass socialist politics of the Left.

What is coming to be acknowledged in discussion of the SDP is the significance of its emergence. In assessing this significance both the perspectives outlined here have their place, but it is necessary to combine their insights in order to understand the role the SDP is

playing and could play in British politics. The debate suffers from viewing the rise of the SDP too exclusively from the standpoint of Labour and the problems of Labour. What needs to be done is to look at the impact of the SDP on the whole political system, and in particular its impact on the Conservative Party.

THE SDP AND THE TORIES

There is no doubt that the electoral success of the Alliance has been staggering. The individual by-election victories at Croydon NW and Crosby and the near miss at Warrington may not have achieved the greatest swings ever recorded, but unlike so many famous by-election victories in the past they were not isolated occurrences but form part of a distinctive pattern. The Alliance has been securing over 40% of the vote in the polls and has achieved that level of support in three very different constituencies, one of them a marginal. Their vote may well be essentially a protest vote, a vote against the two main parties, their records, their divisions, and their policies, but its scale also makes it more than that. The levels of support the Alliance has been receiving make it a genuine third force and a genuine alternative government. Nothing like it has ever been seen in British politics before.

It is not surprising that the old parties have begun to display signs of mild hysteria. One helpful computer projection after Crosby suggested the Conservatives might manage to hold on to one seat at the next general election. Yet although the Conservatives face the more immediate challenge from the SDP, the SDP will perhaps inflict more permanent damage on Labour. The reason why the Conservatives must fear the Alliance more in the short run is partly because the Conservatives are in government, and this Government and this Prime Minister are currently the most unpopular since polling began. Partly also it is because more Conservative than Labour seats appear vulnerable to the Alliance. The dispute between the partners in the Alliance over the distribution of seats arises because the Liberals wish to contest those seats where they are strongest and have built up a strong local party organisation. Many Liberals would prefer the SDP to contest safe Labour seats where Liberals have made negligible impact in the past. The implication is that the SDP leadership fears that the present poll rating of the

Labour risks becoming a trade union party rather than a broad 'people's party'

Alliance will not be maintained, that the Alliance will as a result capture far more Tory seats than Labour ones at the next election, and that the Liberals if they contest the most 'winnable' Tory seats will emerge as the much larger party. There is no doubt that the SDP has already shown at Warrington, and in numerous local by-elections, that it can make substantial inroads into the Labour vote. But it seems strangely reluctant as yet to stake its future on it. The prospect of sharing in the pickings from the prospective electoral collapse to which Mrs Thatcher is driving the Tory Party seems more attractive.

A growing fear

The threat to the Conservatives, at least for the next election, is undeniably serious. They have held off third party upsurges before when they were in government — particularly the Liberal revivals of

¹ Chris Husbands 'The Politics of Confusion', *Marxism Today*, February 1982.

² Eric Hobsbawm *The Forward March of Labour Halted?* London, Verso 1981.

³ One presentation of this perspective can be found in Bob Rowthorn 'The Past Strikes Back' *Marxism Today*, January 1982.

1962-4 and 1972-4. But great though the support was that the Liberals attracted and spectacular though some of the by-election victories were, the Liberals' fatal handicap was that beyond their core vote (around 7-10% of the electorate), few believed they could form a government and this both placed a brake on the attraction of new supporters and encouraged others to drift back to their original party when the general election came. But the Alliance is a much more credible alternative government — Roy Jenkins manages to convey the impression that he is Prime Minister already — so there is correspondingly less reason for voters to return to the Conservatives when the election comes.

There are signs that some Conservatives are coming to see the Alliance as their main opponent at the next election. This is a prospect they might relish for their class but hardly for their party. For the Alliance will be immensely difficult to fight. The Conservatives will have to fight on the Thatcher government's record. Many sections of Conservative support in 1979 are now plainly disaffected, not merely those who have suffered redundancy and unemployment, but those skilled workers who were promised lower taxes and rising real wages and have so far experienced exactly the opposite. Thatcher's reign has created enough bitterness and resentment to sweep away governments with much bigger majorities.

One Nation

The Conservatives' fundamental weakness in the face of the Alliance is because the Alliance has descended like a swarm of locusts on the Conservatives' traditional sacred territory — the lush pastures of One Nation. The Alliance is proclaiming that it alone is the truly classless party, the party that puts nation before class, the party that is moderate and pragmatic in pursuit of the common good, and which has no association with any sectional interest. The Conservatives' riposte to these claims has so far been remarkably feeble. They have attempted to remind the electorate that Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams are really socialists who supported nationalisation and punitive redistributive taxation when they were in office and

the class stalemate would remain and an Alliance government would be no better equipped to deal with it

were prepared to protect the legal rights of the trade unions. But even Saatchi and Saatchi will have difficulty in persuading many electors that Roy Jenkins is a socialist — a word which, as he admits, he has not had occasion to use for a considerable time. Not only will the Conservatives find it difficult to portray the SDP as inherently socialist, they will also find it hard to use the opportunity created by the revival of cold war ideology to brand them as pro-Communist, hence unpatriotic, and in league with the enemies of the country. A party which supports NATO and the EEC as fervently as the SDP can hardly be accused of that.

For sixty years the Conservatives' stance on ideology and policy has been determined primarily by their opposition to socialism and the need to develop a strategy to contain the increasingly assertive Labour movement. The strategy they evolved was based on projecting the party as the party of One Nation, articulating certain recurring and central themes of working class experience which helped substantial sections of the working class to identify more with the Conservative Party than with the institutions and goals of the working class and its Labour movement. The appeal of the Conservatives to the working class and particularly to those sections of the class not in unions, not in work, not in large factories, and not in working class communities, was partly pragmatic — a Conservative society promised greater avenues for individual advancement and

secure rewards for individual effort; partly hierarchical — the Conservatives symbolised social privilege and the established institutions of the state; and populist — the Conservative Party expressed certain widespread xenophobic, racist, sexist, and authoritarian attitudes. The party, so it claimed, understood the British people.

What will it become?

The Conservatives are encountering difficulty in responding to the SDP because they do not know what kind of party the SDP will in fact become. One wing in the SDP around Stephen Haseler and the Social Democratic Alliance, want the party to become a populist

Roy Jenkins manages to convey the impression that he is Prime Minister already

working class party. Its heroes are former leaders of the Labour Right, like George Brown, Ray Gunter and Bob Mellish. Such a party would be fiercely anti-intellectual and anti-socialist, and would seek to express directly what it believes is the unrepresented consensus of working class opinion, a consensus which is in favour of collectivist redistributive measures to secure workers' living standards, but strongly opposed to liberal policies on immigration and capital and corporal punishment. All this is combined with an aggressively nationalistic and pro-Western (although not pro EEC) foreign policy.

Such a party might undermine much of the bedrock on which the Conservative working class vote has been founded and which has been so essential to the party's success. But it is highly unlikely that the SDP will become such a party. Its leaders and its new members (so many of whom have never belonged to a political party before) appear overwhelmingly to share the attitudes of the liberal establishment and the liberal intelligentsia. The SDP will be a high-minded party far more influenced by John Stuart Mill than Robert Blatchford. This will aid the Conservative Party in holding on to their vote, but not much, since there is not much chance either of the Conservative Party choosing what has for some time been their best vote-maximising strategy and campaigning wholeheartedly for the anti-immigrant and pro-hanging vote.⁴ The party has toyed with it, and Powell in his campaign to halt immigration showed the enormous potential of such an open appeal. But an uninhibited populist campaign on race and law and order would split the Tory leadership, and would be hard to mount effectively while the party remains in government.

The Conservatives, therefore, will do well to escape a severe mauling at the hands of the Alliance. But they are likely to survive a fight back, and they have shown in every period of opposition since the war that when they are in opposition they act as a magnet for disaffected groups. They still possess immense if depleted ideological resources as the party of the established institutions of the state and civil society. On the other hand it is conceivable that the Conservatives might disappear; the next general election might lead to the formation of a National government, under cover of which a far-reaching realignment of political forces would take place. A large section of the present Conservative Party might then merge with the SDP to form a new Conservative Party (under whatever label) opposing the Labour Party. But once the electoral system had been reformed several small parties on the Centre and the Right could exist separately, combining to form a coalition government.

THE THREAT TO LABOUR

The possibility that such a reorganisation of the political system might mean an 'American' future for British politics — the permanent weakening of class as a basis for political alignment and the

permanent exclusion of Labour from government — is the conclusion most strongly associated with the first perspective discussed above.

The evidence is contradictory. Despite major social and technological changes the objective strength of the working class in Britain is still overwhelming, and has in some respects been strengthened in the last thirty years. The bulk of the class is composed of second generation workers, mobility into and out of the class is relatively low. Many skills and crafts have been eliminated, much employment in traditional manufacturing has disappeared, but this has been offset by the reduction of skills in many white collar jobs and the growth of unions in these new sectors, particularly the public sector, and amongst women workers. Most striking of all is that although the numerical dominance of the manual working class has declined, the pivotal position of Labour has increased because of the growing centralisation and interdependence of the economy. The comparison between the effect of miners' strikes in the 1920s, when there were four times as many employed in the industry as today, and miners' strikes in the 1970s has often been made. The greatest threat to this great underlying strength of the British labour movement are the twin trends of declining manufacturing output and rising unemployment, which in turn reflect the acceleration of trends towards automation of production in certain sectors and reconstitution of the industrial reserve army of the unemployed.

Politically the labour movement has proved incapable of arresting these trends or significantly influencing their impact. Its objective strength is not matched by its organisational capacity. It is true that trade unionism saw a significant expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, which is only now being halted or reversed. It is also true that the organisation of the class remains extremely strong in many sectors; trade union organisation has been weakened but not dismantled by high unemployment. But the political strength of the labour movement in no way matches its industrial strength and importance. The major victories on pay and trade union rights in the early 1970s were not reflected in lasting political gains. The Labour government from 1974 to 1979 was as defensive as its predecessor and in several

such a reorganisation might mean an 'American' future for British politics

important respects prepared the ground for Thatcherism. There have been two periods of Labour government since 1951 but neither proved adequate to stop the long-term decline in the party's support. Labour's vote has fallen at every election since 1951 (except in 1966). Individual membership has fallen by at least half, much of it in the 1960s. The labour movement has become less united than it was. Some of the fastest growing white collar unions have not affiliated to the Labour Party.

1945 — the missed opportunity

Labour has these problems because it failed to establish itself as the dominant party of government after 1945. What is now so often presented as Labour's heroic period between 1945 and 1951 was not perceived in quite so flattering terms at the time, and it ended with the ceding of the political initiative to Labour's political opponents. Evelyn Waugh is supposed to have said that between 1945 and 1951 the country felt as though it was under enemy occupation. In 1951 the siege was very definitely lifted. It is true the Labour vote remained remarkably loyal between 1945 and 1951 and was actually at its highest level ever in 1951 when Labour lost office. But it was still below 50%. Labour had failed to establish a dominant electoral position despite the great leap in its support which the wartime coalition brought and despite the mood for far-reaching egalitarian



reforms and reconstruction. Labour tried at that time to become the national party, redefining the symbols and the goals of the political nation, but it only had very limited success. The fundamentals of the old order were untouched.

The penalty for this failure to translate the overwhelming objective strength of the working class into organisational strength and political leadership has proved heavy. For the Conservatives returned to office failed to oblige Labour Party expectations by cutting back welfare expenditure and reintroducing policies of sound finance. They also took full advantage of the great world boom in the 1950s. The Labour Party was forced on the defensive and became unsure of its direction. It regarded itself as the main architect of the postwar reconstruction. This was always double-edged, because negatively it helped identify Labour as the party of the inefficient nationalised industries, the bureaucratic welfare services, high taxes and controls on everything. Above all it reinforced the party's image as the party of the trade unions. In the 1950s and 1960s Labour organised its national electoral strategy around two main themes — the defence of the achievements of 1945 and after 1960 the need for a sweeping programme of modernisation. But the failure to implement the modernisation plans has made the last two periods of Labour government most notable for defensive management of short term crises. At least, said Labour ministers in 1970, we have got the balance of payments right. It was about all they could say.

Its failures in office do not seem to have harmed the Labour Party too badly — at least, at the time. It is true that during the Labour governments' incompetent handling of the major sterling crises in 1966-7 and 1976 Labour support fell almost as precipitately as confidence in sterling. But in general the Labour Party in government has attracted support to itself as her Majesty's government governing prudently in the national interest. But in opposition the tension between the party as a party of the state and as a party of the working class reappears, because the balance between the party in parliament and the party in the country and in the unions is different than it is when the party is in office, and the 'anti-national' elements

* cf Ivor Crewe and Bo Särilvik 'Popular Attitudes and Electoral Strategy' in Z. Layton-Henry ed, *Conservative Party Politics* London, Macmillan 1980.

of Labour come to the fore. Labour loses popularity and credibility primarily because the party is associated with the trade unions and with the Left.

'National' versus 'class'

The history of Labourism is the history of the rise of a party leadership which has sought to project itself as a national leadership, fit to take over the direction of the state as it is presently organised from the Conservatives. This has entailed the constant curbing of all those activities within the party which have attempted to identify the national interest with the class interests of the working class. The prize of political legitimacy is only conferred on parties which show themselves ready to operate within the constraints imposed by the British constitution which in turn reflects the political and institutional organisation of the British state. Only such parties appear as national parties in the conservative sense in which the political nation and national interests are defined in Britain. Widespread ignorance and passivity about politics in Britain allows ruling definitions about what is 'national' and what is 'legitimate' and what is 'patriotic' to shape popular perceptions of political events and popular ratings of political parties. The Labour Party was established not by the British state but by the trade unions and it has had a strong campaigning tradition in the past. But it has constantly been torn between operating within the state's own definitions of the 'national' and the 'legitimate' and the definitions which have come from working class experience and socialist politics. It has helped modify the former but it has also helped through the style of its politics to reinforce it, and so has been handicapped by the continuing presence of the latter. The result is that in the past fifty years the political space the Labour Party has created for socialist politics in Britain has never been secure and is now under fundamental attack. The failure of the Labour Party to relate more effectively to new social movements is symptomatic of the failure of the party to maintain itself as a

radical force in British politics. It is a paradox that so many of the leading policies which the party has put forward command considerable support in the electorate, whereas support for the Labour Party has plummeted because the 'anti-national' elements were seen to be gaining ground at the expense of the 'national' elements (in particular at the Wembley Conference and during the deputy leadership campaign).

THE SDP — ORGANISATION AND IDEOLOGY

The rise of the SDP relates directly to the plight of the Labour Party. All mass parties in Britain must attract working class votes. For the SDP the majority of whose leaders have come out of the Labour Party a politics that does not in some way relate directly to the working class is unthinkable. But for reasons already discussed there is little chance of the SDP emerging as a Mark II Labour Party. The SDP has no ambition whatever to be a trade union party, and no trade unions will be able to affiliate to it even if any wanted to do so.

even Saatchi and Saatchi will have difficulty in persuading many electors that Roy Jenkins is a socialist

The party as yet has few people from working class origins either as members or leaders. It has attracted far more managerial and professional workers than rank-and-file trade unionists. It has begun to receive support and funds from some sections of business. The ethos of the party is strongly anti-socialist and to a lesser extent anti-collectivist and anti-union. It is not easy to see at this stage how the party will build up and maintain the kind of committed and loyal support which the other three parties have. Its main base may well lie among certain managerial and intellectual groups in the public sector and in the advanced technology industries. But how stable this support will prove is uncertain. Whether an image as the party of the microchip, the credit card, and the digital watch will give the party the kind of secure identity it needs, also remains in doubt.

One problem for the SDP is that as everyone knows it is not a grass roots party. It has not come about as the expression of some new and insistent social movement. The new politics of the women's movement, the ecological movement, the anti-nuclear movement, and local communities, are much more firmly rooted in the Liberal Party than they are in the SDP. The main issues which excite the SDP leadership are the EEC, constitutional reform, and economic management of a mixed economy. The focus of the party is on the state and the shortcomings in government policy. It does not spring from social movements outside Parliament and the existing organisation of the state. This is the reason for the now familiar contrast between the democratic and radical Liberal Party and the centralist and managerial SDP. Naturally the policy statements of the SDP leadership do not read like that. They abound with the need to widen democracy and to decentralise decision-making. But there are already considerable tensions between the desire of the leadership to keep control over policy in the hands of the parliamentary party and demands from the membership for more participation. Policies are gradually emerging but when they emerge they will tend to be policies drawn up by the prestigious expert committees the party has established, and are unlikely to be significantly influenced by the debates of the rank-and-file membership.

The party also lacks a clear ideological identity. One reviewer thought Shirley Williams' book *Politics for People* should be entitled 'Politics without Pain', so little did it confront the actual choices and dilemmas any SDP government would face. David Owen's book is more substantial but it is flawed by his desire to redraw the Left/Right divide in terms of centralists and decentralisers. It plainly does



not work. One of its more absurd effects in the terms that Owen poses it would be to make him a natural ally of certain currents in the Labour Left, represented by Stuart Holland, Tony Benn, and the Institute for Workers Control, against his former allies in the Labour Right.

SDP and the Labour Right

It is more fruitful to reflect on the issues that divide the SDP leaders from their former colleagues. Callaghan's recent epistle to the electorate in the *Daily Mirror* might after all be mistaken for an SDP policy statement. He expresses support for staying in the EEC, support for NATO, support for the present mixed economy. The national interest as Callaghan and Healey define it is practically identical with the way in which the SDP leadership defines it. But there is one crucial difference: the trade unions. The present leadership of the Labour Party wishes to stay within the Labour Party because it is content that the party should retain its strong links with the trade unions and should continue to protect the corporate privileges of the trade unions. The SDP leaders want a party and a government that is free of all overt entanglements with sectional interests. It wants no special relationship with the trade unions as an organised interest. It wants to project itself as a free-floating party available to serve the national interest without reservation or distraction.

The electoral pay-off up to now has proved enormous. The SDP has thrown off the shackles that have chained Labour to its anti-national, class origins and perspectives. It threatens permanent damage to Labour because the Labour Party cannot sort out whether its primary responsibility is to oppose or to sustain the state. Labour's trade union connection and its socialist constituency parties suggest the former. But the policy perspectives and commitments of the majority of its MPs and its Shadow Cabinet point to the latter. Since Labour leaders can no longer harness the two and assert the overriding importance of the party's national strategy, Labourism is crumbling. By adopting certain elements of the Conservatives' One Nation strategy the Alliance is bidding for the working class constituency which the other two parties have increasingly abandoned.

THE SDP IN POWER

The rise of the SDP has therefore to be considered as far more than a bubble that has to burst. The party is playing and playing very well on one strand of the Conservative One Nation theme which has always been the key to electoral support. The SDP as a centre party is well placed to mobilise the very large numbers of electors who are not strong partisans of either party and who will vote for any party that can credibly promise less social and political conflict and greater economic prosperity. Apart from a major breakdown in the Alliance there is little that can damage the Alliance's image or entirely reverse the electoral gains it has made before the next election. Some kind of SDP participation in government is highly likely therefore, and its performance in government will be crucial in determining whether it holds its support or not.

Let us then suppose an Alliance government. If it is to survive for long it must do what none of its predecessors have done; it must find a way of reversing economic decline and easing the constraints on modernisation. The SDP is being careful not to arouse expectations by promising specific tax cuts or spending plans. But the expectations it has already aroused are nonetheless enormous. What its supporters expect are policies which will reduce conflict and halt the endless crises and cycle of decline.

A fundamental argument of the second perspective, outlined at the beginning, was that the SDP's electoral task is considerably



The national interest as Callaghan and Healey define it is practically identical with the way the SDP leadership defines it

easier than its task in government. There it will find that there are few options open to it. The debate on policy takes place on terrain that Thatcher has marked out, and to which Roy Jenkins, Britain's first monetarist chancellor, is no stranger. The SDP is a post-Thatcher party and the question it will have to answer is whether there is any significant alternative to the policies Thatcher has pursued. There are the alternative policies canvassed by the Tory critics of the government, but no one suggests that these, if implemented, would be much more than palliatives. They would not be sufficient either to restore full employment, or to make the economy expand again. Since an Alliance government would accept the same foreign policy commitments as the Thatcher government — NATO, EEC, and the liberal world economic order — its options are severely limited. To increase employment and output it must find ways of raising the productivity, efficiency, and profitability of British capital. The labour movement must be either coerced or cajoled into accepting a strategy which lowers wages and living standards, and cuts back all collective state services which are not sold on the market. The prospects are not encouraging. The Manpower Research Group at Warwick has recently concluded that there is no mix of policies which can reduce unemployment below 2½ million by 1984.

Two possibilities

There are two main possibilities for an Alliance government within these constraints. Either it could pursue a bold market oriented strategy which might carry out some of the reforms to establish a social market economy which loyal Thatcherites can only dream

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about. Under this heading come measures not just against trade unions but against many of the social rigidities in Britain that obstruct the working of free markets. They could include action against private education and professional cartels as well as sweeping reforms of the tax system, the transfer of the ownership of council houses to their tenants, and a change in the funding basis of all the social services, including education and health, from collective taxation to private insurance. An Alliance government might find it easier to do some of these things than a Conservative government ever would. But it might choose instead to revive a form of modernisation strategy — selective intervention by government to raise efficiency, an incomes policy to restrain costs, and moderate

the Labour Party cannot sort out whether its primary responsibility is to oppose or to sustain the state

reflation. From policy statements currently being issued and from the evidence of the SDP conferences last year, the second looks the more likely, although the temptation to explore the former may well be considerable.

Why should an Alliance government prove any more successful than either Thatcher or Callaghan? There are two main reasons why it might be. The first is the faith that Alliance supporters have in constitutional changes which the Alliance is proposing (most notably PR), which are intended to end adversary politics and create a stable, more open, and less centralised framework for the formulation and implementation of public policy. The trade unions it is argued will have to accept legislation on the statute book which no government will remove for them; capital will have to accept legislation establishing some form of industrial democracy. Policy making will be more consistent and less short term in orientation and less centralised in the hands of a small group of ministers and top officials. The ambiguity of the intentions of the Labour opposition towards business will be ended. This reduction in political uncertainty, combined with the imposition of permanent legal restraints on trade union activity and the pool of low cost labour power will bring at last the investment boom that has eluded every British government. If the Alliance retained business confidence (which Labour never managed) it might become the most interventionist government since the war and might transform government-industry relations.

One other ingredient is needed. The world economy must start to improve. If the election of an Alliance government coincided with even a mild upswing, then assisted by its constitutional reforms, the Alliance might be able to consolidate its position for a long period ahead. All devout supporters of the SDP must pray that Kondratieff

got it wrong and that the next upswing in world capitalism comes a little earlier than he would have expected.

PROSPECTS FOR THE SDP

So far the argument has assumed that the next general election yields an Alliance government with a clear majority. But that would require the Alliance to poll over 40%, ie, to poll as well as its best level in the polls, achieved in 1981 when both Labour and the Conservatives were particularly unpopular. It might be gratifying to certain political commentators if the next election were fought between an unrepentant Thatcherite Conservative Party, the very moderate and reasonable Alliance, and a Bennite Labour party (provided, of course that the Alliance won). But the very success of the SDP, revealing as it does the continuing importance of the One Nation ground for mobilising electoral support, is likely to force the other two parties back to this ground. Indeed the process has already begun, especially in the Labour Party. The effect will probably be to start eroding the support the Alliance has achieved and slowing its progress, particularly as the next election approaches.

If support for the Alliance falls below 40% and support for the other two parties rises back above 30% then the result of the next election becomes wildly unpredictable. The Swingometer has not been invented which could begin to cope with it. A first past the post system is always arbitrary and creates anomalies, but these would multiply alarmingly if there were three powerful parties fighting every seat. It is certainly possible as some computer projections have demonstrated, that given the relative distribution of support, Labour could secure the lowest percentage of the vote and still emerge as the strongest party in seats. But really no one knows. It is hard to see how the present Labour leadership can do more than limit the damage to its electoral base. In electoral terms the SDP has most of the advantages and none of the disadvantages. This means that the old-style Labour coalition cannot probably now be revived, and the Labour movement will have to adjust to electoral reform, which in its early days it regarded as an elementary democratic

Whatever the outcome of the next election, the prospects for the British economy are bleak

reform, but like so much else never managed to implement when it had the opportunity.

Whatever the outcome of the next election (and no possibility is precluded at this stage), the prospects for the British economy are bleak and the political consequences of relative decline continue to multiply. It is not easy to foresee when and how the stalemate will be ended. The resilience of the British economy is far too often underestimated. There is no reason to expect a sudden and terrifying collapse in employment and national income which would bring a decisive contest. There does still exist a space which the SDP can fill provided that world economic trends are relatively favourable. But there will be great difficulties for the SDP's attempt to inaugurate a new era of modernisation. If it fails, or if the next Parliament becomes hopelessly deadlocked, the rise of the SDP may contribute to the fragmentation of political parties which will weaken political leadership and speed the drift towards the strong state that will increasingly be needed to contain the social pressures of a permanent pool of several millions unemployed and a decaying public sector. The period following the next election will show the answer to two key questions — can the SDP become the catalyst for significant modernisation of Britain's antiquated institutions and breathe new life into the economy? Or will this attempt at modernisation collapse as all previous attempts have collapsed? □

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Mick Kelly and Jean Palutikof

Facing up to the weather



Few can have been unaffected by the severe weather of the present winter, yet both the Government and the environmental lobby appear unconcerned about what many scientists consider one of the major environmental issues facing society today.

Underlying the mild hysteria with which the popular press greeted the bad weather this winter is a major environmental problem that must transcend the barriers that exist between the scientist and the layperson. The 'Arctic Hell syndrome', the tendency of the media to treat every cold snap as the forerunner of the next ice age, inevitably results in reluctance on the part of scientists to risk their reputation in the hands of Fleet Street. Many academics and scientists are, of course, notoriously reluctant to talk in intelligible terms to the public, preferring to use academic language to hide their fear of confronting social issues. The standard of treatment of scientific issues by the media provides the final validation of their ivory tower retreat.

Yet we may soon have to face the fact that we have, by polluting the atmosphere with carbon dioxide and cutting down forests, brought about a climatic change on a scale not seen for 10,000 years, a climatic change that could have catastrophic social consequences. This will occur on a timescale that is slow in terms of the lifetime of most governments. The measures that must be taken to avert the worst consequences will be seen as unpleasant by many, inexpedient by politicians. They will have to be taken without the obvious stimulus of heavy snowfall or drought, before an irreversible change has occurred. If scientists' warnings concerning the problem of future climatic change are not taken seriously, are relegated to the 'Arctic Hell' or 'Phew, it's another scorcher' level, we could in a

couple of decades face a world radically different from today — in environment, climate, and possibly socio-economic structure.

A science fiction scenario? Or yet another funding pitch by scientists faced with spending cuts? Informed public debate of these issues is imperative. It is tragic that the environmental lobby in this country has yet to add the carbon dioxide issue to its agenda. It is in this area that society's lack of sensitivity to environment problems, particularly concerning the rational use of the Earth's limited resources, is most clear. And it is in this area that we may soon be taught a very unpleasant lesson. In this article, we discuss the weather of the present winter, the impact of such climatic extremes on society and place these events in the wider context of the carbon dioxide issue.

The winter of 1981-2

The weather of December 1981 and January 1982 in the United Kingdom ranks amongst the coldest and snowiest this century. The winter has been particularly severe, though no more so than in the average Scandinavian winter. A period of severe weather such as this is known as a climatic extreme. They occur from time to time, and are a characteristic of our climate. Sometimes they occur apparently at random, sometimes as part of a slower change in climate. For example, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the UK experienced a sequence of mild winters. This short term climatic fluctuation possibly led to complacency about our winter climate and, in a period of spending cuts, provided an easy rationale for reducing emergency provisions in case of severe weather. Local authorities estimate that their bill for the winter of 1981/82 will amount to close to £100 million — not all would have been saved if they had been better prepared but the cost would certainly not have been so great. The cost in terms of human suffering and death is less easy to estimate. Could the winter have been predicted?

We wish to thank Susan Boland, Brigid Cherry, Niger Huckster, Liz Kelly and Ruth Pearson for their assistance and acknowledge permission to reproduce material from *Climate Monitor*, the bulletin of the Climatic Research Unit, University of East Anglia.

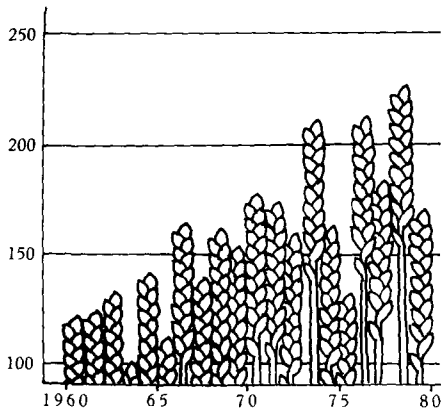


Fig 1. USSR Grain Production (MMT)

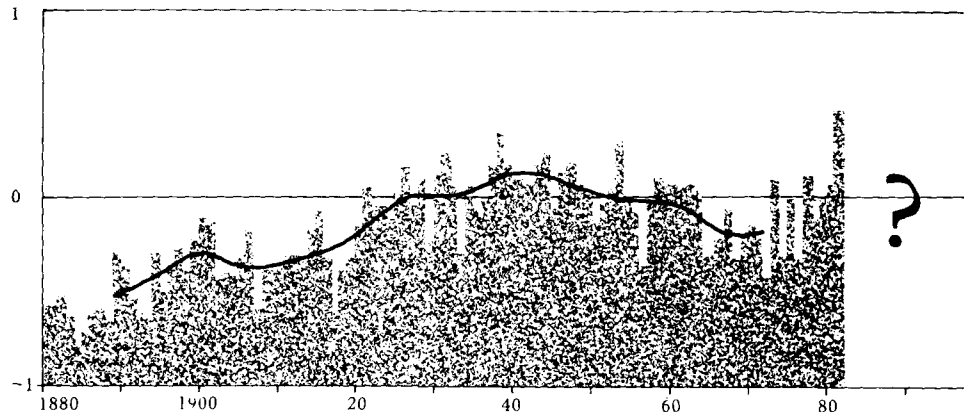


Fig 2. Northern Hemisphere Temperature Change (degrees Celsius)

The immediate cause of the bad weather lay in a disruption of the wind patterns (the atmospheric circulation) that shape our climate. The UK is usually situated beneath the zone of westerly winds that meander round middle latitudes. These westerly winds steer depressions (areas of low pressure) and anticyclones (areas of high pressure) across the country, usually from the west but occasionally, when the meanders are large, from other directions. These westerly winds mark a transition zone between warm southern air masses and cold polar air, and it is the conflict between these air masses that give rise to the depressions and fronts which dominate our weather maps. Sometimes the meanders grow in size and lock into place and the westerly winds are diverted away from their usual track, giving rise to prolonged periods of abnormal weather in certain locations. When the westerly flow is diverted north of the UK, as occurred during the drought of 1975/76, we tend to be affected by southern air masses and the subtropical anticyclone resulting in hot, dry and settled weather. When the westerly flow is diverted south, we tend to be affected by cold northerly air masses, sometimes accompanied by changeable, adverse weather, at other times by cold, settled weather. The winter of 1981/82 falls into the latter category. A marked advance of cold polar air into middle latitudes over the North Atlantic sector resulted in the stimulation of the mid-latitude depressions which brought the snow, and the sub-zero temperatures which prevented the snow melting. The impact was worsened by the fact that when melting occurred it was rapid, resulting in widespread flooding in many areas.

Why the atmospheric circulation occasionally locks into place giving rise to climatic extremes is not well understood. Some climatologists favour explanations rooted in the climate system (the oceans, atmosphere and ice masses of the Earth); others prefer external mechanisms, such as solar or volcanic activity; a few see these events as essentially random and unpredictable. Theories abound, but none is as yet sufficiently well-founded to be used in forecasting. This admission of ignorance reflects the current state of the science of climate change.

Impact on society

Events such as the winter of 1981-82 have an obvious impact on everyday life and no one would deny the effects of climatic extremes in the Third World. The tragic famines in the Sahel and elsewhere in Africa during the 1970s were a graphic example of how a society can be made more vulnerable to climate by socio-economic change. The impact of the current winter on a personal level can be clearly seen in the rise of mortality rates and sickness in the elderly, work lost in the construction industry and elsewhere, and increased financial pressure on the unemployed and low wage earners.

The weather can cause widespread disruption of virtually every

facet of our economy, both in terms of costs and losses. A single snowstorm, lasting only a few hours, can incur costs for road-clearing and emergency and relief services. People fail to arrive at work, and the flow of materials to and from factories is brought to a halt. At the other end of the scale, a major drought persisting over several months can lead to severe crop losses. The drought of 1976 in England and Wales caused a shortfall in cereal production on such a scale that imports to the value of £80 million were necessary to replace losses.

Although we recognise that such disruptions occur, we know surprisingly little about their precise magnitude, nor about how they compare with impacts from other sources. Analysis of recent periods of severe weather, the winter of 1962-3 and the drought of 1975-6, shows that industrial production can be significantly affected¹. The impact in both cases was comparable to that of the three-day working week of early 1974. During the winter of 1962-3, mining and quarrying, shipbuilding, brick and timber industries were badly affected. During the drought of 1975-6, the iron and steel industries and the utilities were most affected, both requiring large quantities of water. And the cost of climate-induced failure in the economic sector is passed on in price rises and job losses.

Climatic change is rarely taken into account in long term planning. For example, despite the fact that day-to-day energy demand is largely determined by the weather, little account is taken of future climatic change in planning energy strategy. The mild winters of the early 70s may well have substantially reduced the effects of the oil crisis of that time.

We have so far only considered climate and climatic impact in the UK. But a period of bad weather in one country can have worldwide effects, given the inter-linking of national economies and the global distribution of resources. This is nowhere more clear than in the fluctuations in world food supplies. During the 1950s and 1960s, world grain production rose steadily (about 3% per year during the 1960s) despite crop failures in various regions associated with climatic extremes. The rapid development of new agricultural lands and techniques made global food supplies quite resilient to local harvest failures until the 1970s.

In the 1970s, however this rise was arrested by a series of climate-induced crop failures, most notably in 1972-3 and 1974-5. In 1960, world reserves of grain, which account for about 70 per cent of world food consumption, stood at a 95-day supply. By 1976, these reserves had dropped to around a 19-day supply. Much of this depletion occurred following a 12% shortfall in the Soviet grain harvest in

¹ JP Palutikof *The Incidence and Impact of Climatic Extremes*. Report on Department of Environment Contract No DGR/480/579, 1981, Climatic Research Unit, Norwich.

1972 and a similar deficit in 1975 (figure 1). One quarter of the United States wheat crop was sold to the USSR following the 1972 harvest failure and, in the same year, the Indian harvest failed owing to a poor monsoon season. Even though these local harvest failures only resulted in a drop in world production of around 1%, such was the vulnerability of world food supplies at that time that the world price of wheat more than doubled as panic buying triggered a period of price inflation.

As world food supplies become more limited and more vulnerable, the need to take climate into account becomes increasingly important — and the responsibility that society must accept for future climate change becomes greater. What of the future?

In planning the rational use and distribution of the world's limited resources, reliable forecasts of climate, one year, ten years and more ahead, would be of obvious value. But this requires a degree of understanding of climatic change which is not yet available. For much of the present century, climatology, and particularly the study of climatic change, has been neglected in favour of the development of a reliable system of day-to-day weather prediction. Although this neglect was largely due to the more immediate gain resulting from accurate weather forecasts, it was compounded by the fact that the period of rapid advance in the understanding of the atmosphere coincided with a time of climatic improvement in many regions — for example the marked warming of the Northern Hemisphere land masses during the early 20th century (Figure 2). While climatic deterioration is soon registered and scientific interest and research as a result stimulated, this climatic improvement passed relatively unnoticed. Although commented on by a handful of scientists, the major climatic shift of the late 19th century and early 20th century was not widely accepted until the 1950s. By that time, the warming had ended and climatic deterioration soon affected many regions.

The problem of climatic change was not taken seriously by atmospheric scientists until recent decades. Advances in computing then enabled the analysis of the large collection of instrumental weather data collected over the centuries and the development of sophisticated numerical climate models. The former led to the realisation that climate changed on all timescales, from year to year, decade to decade, and century to century; the latter led to a climatic change becoming a topic of interest to theoreticians — it provided an elegant test of their numerical models. So climatic change is a relatively new science, at the stage of data collection, analysis and grand speculation rather than forecasting using accepted scientific laws. Nevertheless, advances have been made and climatologists are gradually approaching a consensus concerning one possible course of future climate.

In the early 1970s, the World Meteorological Organisation reported on some two dozen forecasts of climatic developments over the coming thirty years. There appeared to be a surprising degree of agreement. Most of the forecasts favoured continued cooling (see Figure 2), a shift away from the warmer and largely beneficial climatic conditions of the early 20th century. The fundamental basis of these predictions, whether explicit or not, was the observation that the climatic epoch experienced during the 20th century was unique in the context of the last 100 years. It was not, therefore, likely to continue for much longer.

That set of predictions was based on the past record of so-called 'natural' climatic fluctuations: those occurring during the period when society's activities probably did not affect climate to a significant degree. Since then, awareness of our potential to alter climate has increased. It is now obvious that this factor must be incorporated in any attempt at a long-range climate prediction. In a report published in 1978, the National Defense University, Washington DC,

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sampled the opinions of leading climatologists concerning future climatic changes. The consensus reached was the opposite of that of the forecasts reviewed by the World Meteorological Organisation only a few years earlier. On balance they predicted warming due to carbon dioxide pollution of the atmosphere.

The carbon dioxide issue

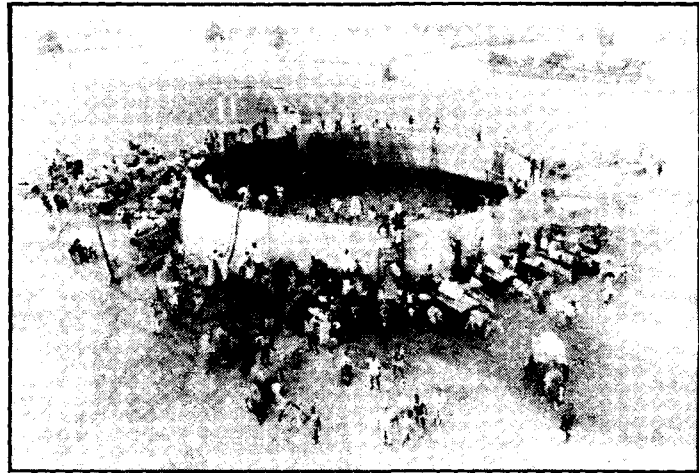
By polluting the atmosphere through burning fossil fuels and deforestation, we are increasing the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide — by the year 2050, it is predicted, it will have doubled. There are uncertainties in this prediction, it is of necessity based on forecasts of future energy strategy, but there is no doubt that carbon dioxide levels are rising at an unparalleled rate. The global carbon balance is being dramatically upset as we return to the atmosphere carbon which has been stored underground for millions of years. And carbon dioxide in the atmosphere plays an important role in the Earth's energy balance — the so-called 'greenhouse' effect.

Carbon dioxide allows the energy from the sun to pass through to heat the Earth's surface, so providing the driving force behind the atmospheric circulation, the world's weather patterns, and hence climate. However, it traps energy trying to escape from the Earth. A rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels leads to a rise in temperature; the same amount of energy reaches the Earth's surface, but less energy escapes. Numerical models predict that a doubling of carbon dioxide levels will lead to a global rise in temperature of 2 to 3° C. This is greater in magnitude and speed than any climatic change experienced since the last ice age and, if it occurs, will inevitably have grave social consequences — it will affect food supplies, economic development and possibly societal stability.

The predicted rise in temperature of 2 to 3° C is averaged over the world. Some regions will warm much more than this, others may cool slightly. The geographical patterns of climatic change can be complicated. For example, the severe cold of this winter was restricted to an area around the North Atlantic Ocean. Elsewhere, conditions were remarkably warm. While the UK was freezing, it was the warmest December in the 100-year record over the hemisphere as a whole! As the weather patterns change, some regions will get drier and some will get wetter, affecting agricultural production. The Earth's climate system will adjust rapidly — society may not be able to adapt so quickly. The first changes could be noticeable this decade.

The scientific uncertainties are, however, great and scientists are careful to express their predictions in terms of scenarios, or possibilities, rather than firm forecasts. Assessment of the precise societal impact is also problematic, being affected by the scientific uncertainties as well as ignorance of past effects of climate on society. It is in this context that climatologists have to face up to their responsibility to society and that society has to decide what it requires of science. The intent of this article has been to provide background information, but we end by listing some of the issues that we, as scientists, face and that we all may soon have to confront.

If action is to be taken to avert the potential consequences of increased carbon dioxide levels, for example, by pollution control or alternative energy strategies, decisions have to be taken soon. There is already evidence that the Earth is warming again (see Figure 2, 1981 was the warmest year on record) and lag effects mean that reducing carbon dioxide production now will not have an appreciable effect on atmospheric carbon dioxide levels for some ten years. Decisions concerning energy strategy will have to be international, will affect the Third World hardest (where the potential and need for increased usage of fossil fuel is greatest), and will almost certainly lead to a drop in the standard of living of many people. Given the



a global rise in temperature of 2 to 3 degrees would have grave social consequences

nature of global politics, it is difficult to see any international action being taken. Will any politician act when their self-interest is threatened? It will be too easy to delay 'until the scientific uncertainties are resolved', by which time it may be too late.

Society's planning time scale is too short to permit anything beyond coping with immediate problems (with immediate being generally defined as before the next election). Perhaps a problem which originates in the present but has consequences some ten years in the future is, for all practical purposes, insoluble. A depressing prospect — perhaps the role of the scientist is simply to say 'I told you so' when the worst has happened.

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Further reading:

WW Kellogg and R Schwarc *Climatic Change and Society — Consequences of Increasing Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide* 1981 Westview Press, Boulder.

JP Palutikof, 'Economic disruption caused by climatic extremes' *Climate Monitor*, 10 (3), 68-73.

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Women's pay remains much worse than men's. The equal pay momentum of the seventies has ground to a halt, and the reasons lie in the basic inequality between women and men.

Beatrix Campbell

Women: not what they bargained for



It is still unclear how socialist forces in Britain will re-group out of the debacle of the 70s and come up with a popular political programme. Unity is constantly invoked in such difficult times, which usually means people don't want to answer for their recent past, and that as long as we stick together we'll win. But win what? For whom? And how? Proponents of unity often seem blissfully ignorant of the conflicts of interest within the working class, and of course, charge those who feel penalised by the sexual or racial divisions within the class with the slur of divisiveness.

The fact is that class struggle has been waged for too long too much in the image of 'me Tarzan, you Jane' — crude, conservative and chauvinist. And it has contributed not a little to the political dark ages in which we now find ourselves. For too long feminism has found itself on the margins of socialist politics, critical, powerless and excluded, claiming special needs, treated as a special problem. Feminism *does* have something to say, however, which strikes deep at the heart of what class struggle is about. This article is concerned with our recent political history, and future political strategy, and starts with a simple question: what's in it for women?

It originates in a long period of consciousness-raising by a group of socialist-feminists working together in the women's liberation journal *Red Rag*. Our consciousness-raising was preoccupied with our feelings about the crisis of the Left towards the end of the seventies, and with personal dilemmas experienced by women with children, in trying to operate within a labour market that defines breadwinners as persons who are not responsible primarily for their own domestic reproduction or that of their children — as men. It was that dilemma which led us to discussion of the structure of work and male trade union priorities. Our critique emerged in two articles — 'Work to Rule', written with Valerie Charlton, in 1978 and 'United We Fall' in 1980, which proposed an alternative approach, a socialist feminist strategy for struggles in the sphere of waged work.

Pay

Both the government and the labour movement entered the 70s knowing that the Equal Pay Act would only have a limited effect on the entrenched financial inequality of women, not least because it only compared 'similar' work. The government itself admitted that the Act would probably only add about 3% to the national wages bill. Some elements of the labour movement had been reluctant to legislate for equal pay, and stressed that it should be a matter for collective bargaining. As it turned out the Act did provide the most important focus for equal pay struggles in the 70s, and collective

the history of trade union's defence against the power of capital in Britain was associated with craft and sex chauvinism

bargaining was also the major instrument of implementation in the face of machiavellian activities by employers' organisations to circumvent its impact. In 1969, women overall earned less than half the male average overall. By 1975, the deadline for implementation, women had achieved 58% of men's overall earnings. By 1978 it was clear that the slight improvement would be stalled. This is indeed what happened. *Labour Research* pointed out in January 1979 that the trend in the 70s to narrow the sex differential was now in reverse. The 1978 New Earnings Survey showed that while male manual workers gross weekly earnings rose by an average of 13.4%, manual women's pay rose by only 12.9% and while non-manual men went up by 13.9%, non-manual women went up only 12%.

Why did the equal pay movement prove inadequate? Not only was the legislation limited, but it failed to tackle fundamental inequalities in the labour market between men and women. The labour

market is characterised by a sexual division of labour, which establishes men as 'breadwinners'. Women are primarily seen as domestic labourers whose wage labour is organised as supplementary and subordinate to men. The breadwinners' wage is conceptualised as the 'family wage', supposedly sufficient to maintain a wife and children in a relation of dependency.

The family wage debate

The family wage has been the fulcrum of a debate among feminists over the last few years, which has also asked the question what are wages for, and what interests are expressed in collective bargaining? We argued in the *Red Rag* articles that the family wage constituted a barricade against women's incursions on male privilege in bread and butter bargaining, and that a feminist wages policy must assault the concept as it operates in both the social security and wages systems. Not to do so would be to acquiesce in women's economic inequality.

The notion of the family wage developed in the nineteenth century with the rise of industrial capitalism. Women's subordination preceded capitalism, of course, but patriarchal relations were built into capitalism in new forms. Trade union organisation belonged to men, specifically skilled men, and the history of trade unions' defence against the power of capital in Britain was characteristically associated with craft and sex chauvinism. Male chauvinist trade unionism campaigned in the nineteenth century to expel women from the labour market, to corral them into a privatised domestic sphere, to remove them as competitors in the labour market by rendering them economically and sexually subordinate within the home. This process was expressed in the idea of the family wage — a male breadwinner's right to earn enough to keep his wife and children in dependency.

Jane Humphries has charted the development of the concept in an essay on capitalism and the persistence of the working class family.¹ The ideology of the family wage was instrumental in making women subordinate in both wage labour and in the family. It also reflected the way in which industrial capitalism took a patriarchal form. Male-dominated trade unionism, Humphries argues, promoted the patriarchal family, and adopted forms of defence which involved not acting on behalf of the whole class, but acting to regulate the labour of women. The effect was to reinforce 'sex-based relations of dominance and subordination.'

Its effects

Humphries records a labourer's plea in 1825 to fellow workers to limit 'the number of those who work for wages, to prevent their wives and children from competing with them in the labour market.' She herself is not wholly out of sympathy with the trade unions' systematic campaign to evacuate women from wage labour and instal them in the home. Many feminists have contested her conclusion that, as a result, the working class family was saved from the intrusions of the capitalist market, and have also criticised her treatment of the effects on women's lives. According to Phillips and Taylor, for example, the form of craftsmen's battle with capital over control of the supply of labour and labour process involved the 'sexualisation of skill.' Because the main protagonists were men the result was that 'skill has been increasingly defined *against* women.'² Other feminists have argued that the family cannot be understood without reference to the 'terrain of compromise' between capital and labour '... the family wage ... assured the continued existence of the family as a necessary income-producing unit. The family, supported by the family wage, thus allows the control of women's

labour by men, both within and without the family.'³

Hilary Land has shown that 'once established, the idea of the family wage has been strongly defended. It was feared that any weakening of the concept might have a damaging effect not only on men's pay, opportunities and incentives in the labour market, but also on women's incentives to provide domestic services in the home.'⁴

Land documents the contradictory forces within the working class ranged against interference with the men's control of family incomes, as represented in the concept of the family wage. Eleanor Rathbone campaigned within socialist and feminist circles for family allowances, and the replacement of the family wage by a minimum wage sufficient for a single person plus collectively funded child allowances aimed at revolutionising the system of child support and women's dependence. But this approach — which we support as a feminist strategy in contemporary politics — met with much opposition.

We argued in 'Work to Rule' that the trade union movement speaks with forked tongue on women's pay. 'The labour movement has managed to combine a commitment to equal pay with a commitment to the family wage. You can't have both.' The only way we can overcome this is by waging an assault on the residual fortifications of male privilege in the wages system.

Time

We have seen that the wage system expresses an intractable relation of dependence and domination between men and women. The financial differential must also however, be understood by reference to men and women's different relation to working time.



¹ Jane Humphries, 'Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family,' *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, No 3 Sept 1977.



While full-time domestic labour has dropped dramatically, being now confined almost exclusively to pensioners, unemployed women and mothers of pre-school children, mothers' participation in the waged workforce stands in sharp contrast with that of fathers. It is a commonplace among trade union negotiators that women always give priority to time. Partly, of course, their financial dependence on men, and men's expectations to earn more, colours their financial priorities. But certainly, women trade unionists tend to attach greatest priority to time — time off, and their own time.

Men and women also experience the politics of time differently. Again, it is conventional wisdom among negotiators that male workers will often view campaigns for a shorter working week as an indirect wage rise (because they seem to increase the opportunities for overtime) whereas for women it means real time off. Historically, both employers and unions have tended to regard women's commitment to a short working week as expressing lack of commitment to

employment, a sort of backwardness. This originates in the equation of full-time work with men's work. But men's relation to waged work is dependent on someone else, a woman, taking care of their household. Fatherhood does not interrupt their work. In other words men's domestic under-achievement makes them the models for full-time employment.

Women's equality has generally been assumed to mean their participation in the labour market on men's terms. We argued in 'Work to Rule', however, that women's relation to working time, domestic time, children's time and their own time should be taken as a model for campaigns around reduced working time. This would mean that the model for full-time work would correspond to children's schedules in nurseries and schools — parents and children's time could be synchronised in ways that are today only achieved in the main by childcare centres in the voluntary sector or child minders, and even then only partially. And among adults in the work force, the establishment of working time that corresponded to parents' needs would erode mothers' disadvantageous position in the labour force. What this needs is a leap of imagination — instead of taking men's working week as the model, and campaigning for women's 'special' needs, women's working could be taken as the model, with political priority given to a massive reduction in hours, abolition of the contractual and financial disadvantages of part-timers, and the right to flexible time and time off. It is only in this political context that women *en masse* can confidently demand equal shares of domestic duty. This political approach would challenge the ways in which men's parental passivity is rewarded, while women's parental activity is punished.

Job segregation

What the struggles around the Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act confirmed was that equal pay as such would not budge the apartheid between men and women in the jobs they actually do. While it was true that after World War II women re-entered the labour force on a massive scale, it was also true that they were entering a more intensely segregated jobs market. We knew it was bad — but just how bad? 'Changes have often been in the direction of greater segregation rather than integration of the sexes in the work sphere.'⁵ Catherine Hakim's research showed that 'women were not being drawn into male-dominated occupations, but into slowly-expanding female dominated occupations for which the supply for single women was inadequate.'

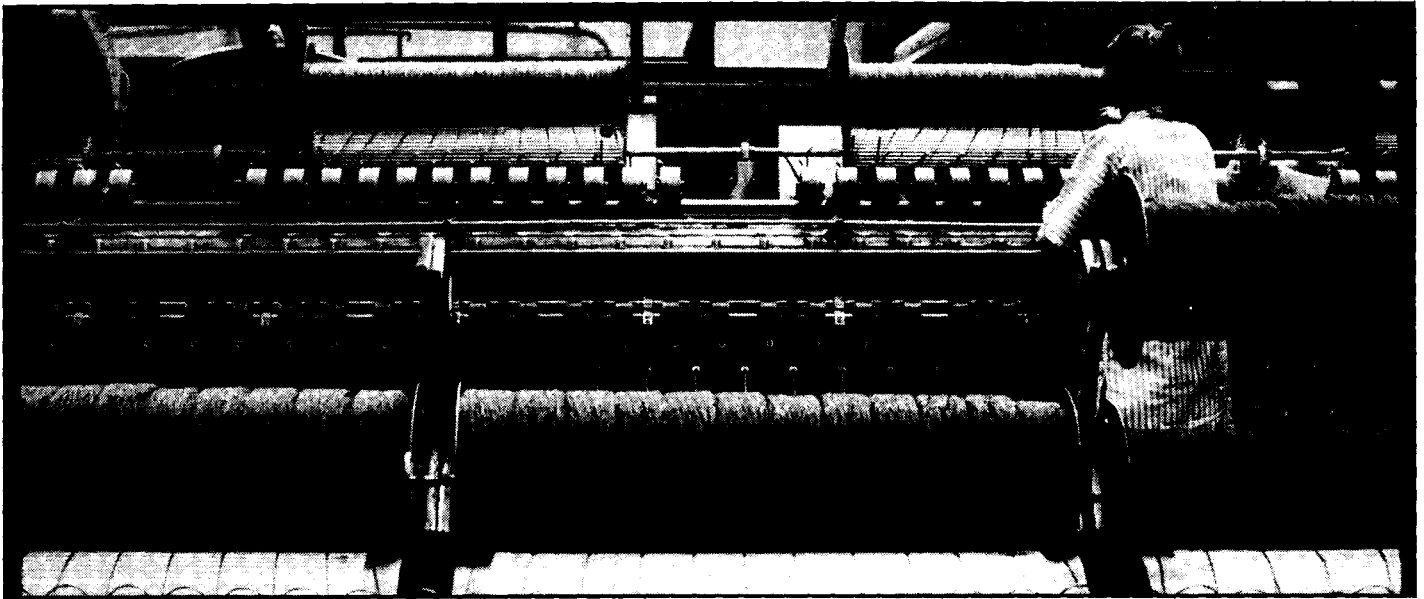
In addition, access to jobs deemed skilled has changed dramatically over the course of the century. Among manual workers, the proportion of women at the beginning of the century was around 30%. Of these 24% were regarded as skilled. By 1971 only 13.5% were deemed skilled. The proportion who were unskilled at the beginning of the century was 15.5%, which by 1971 had more than doubled to 37.2%. A similar pattern emerged among white collar workers.

So, women may no longer be barred from waged employment, but the terms on which they gain access are intensely discriminatory. Many feminists in the trade union movement have come to the conclusion that the equal pay movement of the 70s must be converted into a positive action programme to create equal opportunities, on the grounds that it is job segregation that creates the inequalities. While this is true, it must not divert attention from the ways in which privileges associated with certain jobs remain a matter of power and bargaining muscle — properties from which women have been dispossessed. Thus, what is at stake for feminist trade unionism is not just positive action campaigns, but an assault on the labyrinth of differentials and hierarchies which set workers in competition with each other.

Hours in waged work

	Men	Women
Under 36 hours	1.5% (manual)	30.5% (all women)
36-40	46% (all men)	61% (all women)
over 48	27.8% (manual)	1.4% (all women)
	19% (all men)	

Figures taken from New Earnings Survey, 1977.



Differentials

It is worth recalling that when the Ford sewing machinists went on strike in 1968, it was not actually for equal pay. They wanted to be re-graded, and made equivalent to semi-skilled production workers. The unions fought for equal pay within their grade, which was achieved. What the women never got, however, was the upgrading they had struck for in the first place. Some trade unions during the 70s did attempt to attack the effect of differentials and arbitrary gradings. In particular TASS, the white collar section of the engineering union, developed the concept of Men's Pay for Women to deal precisely with those cases where women might have no comparable group of men with whom to compare themselves. If a man was doing her job, what would he be paid? Many of their pay struggles involved not so much equal pay as re-gradings. But even this sort of strategy founders on the rock of differentials.

If job segregation is a major obstacle to women's economic equality, then it follows that we must ask what turns on that segregation.

**action which erodes wage differentials is
likely, in general, to be pro-women and pro-
the poor**

It is of course differentials. And just as job segregation must become a target of positive action programmes, so must differentials become target of feminist attention. Clearly, you can't say simply abolish differentials. It may be that a strategy for women could be to consolidate differentials in certain instances. What is being suggested is rather that differentials are not immutable, and that they are not immune from political pressure. Political action which increases or consolidates differentials is likely, in general, to be anti-feminist. Political action which erodes differentials is likely, in general, to be pro-women and pro-the poor.

Pay and politics

How has the politics of pay impinged on this situation over the last decade? The political skirmishes which took place during the 60s and 70s around pay were particularly relevant to women, since this was the conjuncture in which women entered the political stage as a force for the first time in decades. There are two aspects of the period which shall be discussed here: — the role of the National Board for Prices and Incomes (formed in 1968 and disbanded in 1971) in helping to lay down the official framework within which women's

pay and low pay were evaluated during the 70s; — the social contract and the debate around free collective bargaining.

The National Board for Prices and Incomes and the national debate before and after the social contract are important for what they reveal about the ideological fortifications of male chauvinism.

The NBPI's work framed the parameters of low pay policy during the decade. In this sense its ideological as well as its pragmatic programme had weight in the 70s beyond its own institutional existence. The terms of reference it laid down at the beginning of the decade influenced the powerful official machinery wheeled out at the end of the decade to adjudicate in many public sector pay struggles, which makes its history particularly relevant to women.

The Board argued in one of its reports that it was 'necessary to consider the position of men and women separately; otherwise the problem of low pay could be practically synonymous with that of low pay among women, and this could ignore the social significance of the fact that men's earnings are normally the main source of family income . . .'⁶ In a plethora of reports on low-income industries the Board ratified women's inequality either on the grounds that they were not low paid compared to women in general, or that their wages were supplementary to the breadwinner.

Moreover, if there is any doubt about the resilience of the NBPI's influence, or of the family wage concept, we only need to look at the operations of the Clegg Commission on Pay Comparability at the end of the seventies. It systematically favoured the high paid, and discriminated against the lowest paid women's grades by awarding them the lowest percentage increases, often well below the rate of inflation.

Trade union attitudes

But it was not only among the employers and their ideologists that the concept of the family wage/women's dependency thrived. The

² Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor, 'Sex and Skill, Notes Towards a Feminist Economics, *Feminist Review* No 6, 1980.

³ Heidi Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, in *Capital and Class* No. 81979.

⁴ Hilary Land, 'The Mantle of Manhood', *New Statesman*, 18/25 December, 1981.

⁵ Catherine Hakim, 'Occupational Segregation', *Research Paper No 19*, Dept of Employment, 1979.

⁶ NBPI Report No 169, General Problems of Low Pay, Cmnd 4648, HMSO London 1971.

trade unions answered the employers case with the same *imprimatur* of women's subordination within the family.

'... the Commission should bear in mind that the most obvious comparison for many of the lower-paid grades and earnings within local authorities manual work at the moment must be a comparison with the net earnings they might be entitled to, were their income determined by supplementary benefit rates and the official poverty line ... Taking males and females together in 1978 about half of all full-time workers in local authority services were earning less in terms of their net earnings than a *typical family* would obtain through social security ...'

The union case was modelled on Supplementary Benefit rates for married men with dependent wives and children. This was a model of a 'typical family' which had little bearing on reality. In 1981 the Department of Employment disclosed that its figures showed that

a cult of militancy which assumed that the low paid would be rewarded by the efforts of the higher paid

only 5% of the workforce headed such a 'typical family'. Employers have been known to respond to such arguments by saying, with reference to their female employees, that since they were female, and perhaps part-time, the SB benchmark and poverty line arguments were irrelevant.

Having said all this, the trade union movement, particularly in the public sector, made strenuous efforts to hoist their members' relatively low pay, and to equalise men and women's hourly rates. NUPE was especially successful, and foregrounded the interests of its lowest-paid women members.

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Concentrated efforts, like NUPE's, were being made the context of debate within the trade union movement itself about the failure of collective bargaining to shift the relative impoverishment of women and the low-paid. Unfortunately for the Left in the labour movement, consciousness of this problem was trawled by the Right in defence of wage restraint during the period of the social contract. The TUC leadership accepted restricted growth in consumption, something to which the Left was opposed.

Low pay and women

In 1974, the year in which Heath's Conservative government was defeated and Labour was elected on one of its most radical programmes, the TUC Economic Review affirmed free collective bargaining, but took the initiative in calling for a 'new approach' by negotiators to reform 'outdated pay structures.' It suggested an attack on low basic rates, attainment of 'reasonable minima' and 'more effective priority to eliminating discrimination against certain groups, particularly women.'

The Right stole the ideological initiative during the first couple of years of the social contract, while the Left retreated into a sort of sulk.

The £6 flat rate increase in Phase One of the social contract appeared to stymie a militant response because among the organised low paid it was admitted among consenting adults in private that it was better than they could have hoped for in the normal course of events. The Left was indeed correct in arguing that the social contract did not tackle the real crisis in the British economy, but it failed to present an alternative *democratic* wages strategy of its own.

The Right appeared to capture a political moment by raising the interests of the low paid and women, in the context of a critical review of 'outdated' bargaining priorities. It should be said that the



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Right's efforts were not commensurate with its rhetoric — as ever it was simply concerned with the administration of consensus and the evasion of struggle — an approach best expressed in the words of engineering leader Duffy who once said of a national wage settlement 'this is the best we can get without a struggle.' Lest the vitriol should be seen to be solely reserved for the Left in this article, it ought to be said that this argument comes from the Left and is a dialogue within the Left. We are less concerned with the failures of the Right, which were predictable, than with the failures of the Left, which were much more problematic for feminism.

Being serious about women

This is a conversation within the Left, and the central point is that at a crucial moment in women's politics the Left appeared to be stuck in a macho mud. It invoked class struggles as a response to the Right's class collaboration of the mid-seventies, but it failed to identify which bits of the class were to benefit. It clung to a cult of militancy which assumed that the low-paid would be rewarded by the efforts of the higher paid, without recognising that this pattern would only reproduce the balance of relativities which were precisely the problem when what women workers needed was a redistribution within the working class, as much as redistribution between classes.

After the debacle of the IMF loan, and the failure of the social contract to benefit the working class, the Left returned to the offensive within the TUC and a return to free collective bargaining was secured. But it was restored on the bandwagon of differentials, which in a sexually segregated labour market meant that women had nothing, relatively speaking, to gain. The movement scurried back to its old, butch standards. As Lord Allen, chairperson of the TUC put it, there would be reward for effort, skill and commitment. The Left failed to differentiate its campaign for the return to free collective bargaining from the *form* and *content* advocated by the Right.

Bob Rowthorn, in his book *Capitalism, Conflict and Inflation* implicitly notes precisely the problem, that unless politics was to the fore, 'the Left is forced to appeal to purely sectional interests . . . this stores up trouble for the future.' He added that the Left made demands for a return to free collective bargaining as if it were an end in itself, unrelated to the content of political transformation. If the Left were to take on board the design of what Sam Aaronovitch, in his book *The Road From Thatcherism*, describes as a progressive wages policy of its own, then it would have to be seen to be assimilating the interests of women, taking to its heart women's ways and women's wants in the sphere of workplace politics.

A feminist wage policy

So, what would a progressive feminist wages policy look like? A contribution to this question comes from a summary of the package proposed in *Red Rag*, as a minimum condition for women:

- * A target for reduced working time of a 30-hour week for all, which would have at its centre a campaign to democratise domestic work;
- * The abolition of contractual differences between full and part-timers;
- * Abolish the concepts of family wage and the male breadwinner as they operate in the wage and welfare system;
- * Campaign against women's dependence on men and forms of wage bargaining which protect men's privilege in the wage system;
- * Challenge the sex differential by, where appropriate, awarding proportionately greater increases to women, and adopting the flat rate tactic. The flat rate across the board is an important device in hoisting women's and low pay, and pushing the boundaries of women's pay struggles well beyond the limits of the Equal Pay Act. Flat rate is supported by many socialists in the labour movement,



class struggle has been waged for too long too much in the image of 'me Tarzan, you Jane'



and has a particular resonance among women;

- * Establish a target national minimum wage;
- * Remove child maintenance from the terrain of wage bargaining by fighting for child support commensurate with the cost of children, and of child care, socially funded and determined at the political level;
- * Establish an award to wageless women equivalent to the pension, sickness benefit or student grant, during the period in which parents are on leave from employment due to parenthood. This could be done by massively extending and increasing maternity benefits.
- * Expand the boundaries of collective bargaining to those aspects of income determined at the political level and to embrace a critique of plus a campaign for the social wage. Clearly women have a specific investment in the social services which can only be given fullest expression in political rather than industrial terms. Defence of the social wage and therefore employment and services for women must straddle workplace and state politics.

What this amounts to is a major wage offensive for women, a social campaign which places women and the care of children at the centre of the political stage. □

⁷ Initial Submission on Behalf of Local Authority Manual Workers by the Trade Union Side of the Local Authority (Manual Workers) Joint Industrial Council to the Clegg Commission on Pay Comparability.

Ron Smith Defence After Trident

The future of Trident looks unlikely. But that doesn't mean any basic change in defence policy.

Within the last few years there has been a revival of concern in the UK about defence issues. After a period when military matters were widely regarded as technical questions to be decided by experts, they have returned to the centre of the political stage. Increased east west tension and weapons system modernisation have made the public more conscious of the threat of nuclear annihilation. Systems like SS20s, Cruise and Pershing II missiles, neutron bombs, MX and Trident have been seen not merely as trading in old systems for new as their proponents would present them, but a qualitative escalation which increases the likelihood of war. In the UK the increasing burden of defence expenditure at a time of falling real income and cuts in social services has also spurred concern.

Ironically the debate has also been fuelled by divisions within the defence establishment. Even with the prodigal military budgets proposed by the present government, the UK cannot afford to maintain its present strategic roles. Substantial reductions in the size of one or more of the services

seems inevitable and this is recognised within Whitehall. Each group in the military and the bureaucracy is thus trying to mobilise political support for its position while attempting to discredit its rivals. The real enemies of the British army become not the IRA and the Soviets, but the navy and airforce who are trying to cut its budget and recall the army from the Rhine, to provide the cash for new ships and planes. This bureaucratic infighting has had the benefit that much more information has been brought into the public domain. This is illustrated by the contrast between the degree of public information on Chevaline — the Polaris warhead enhancement project — and Trident decisions. The warhead research programme was begun in 1967

under the codename Antelope, and went into development in 1973 as Chevaline. It was confirmed in 1974 by a small group of Labour ministers, the cabinet merely being informed that a Polaris improvement programme was under way at a cost of some £250 million. The first the public heard of it was in 1980 when Pym described Chevaline to the Commons, which by then had cost over a billion.¹ Although many politicians and public servants wish that a similar degree of secrecy was the rule, divisions within the bureaucracy and economic pressures have brought important issues into the open. As a result there has been more public discussion of Trident than any other comparable defence issue. In many ways this Trident debate represents a turning point, but to see why this is so some background to British defence policy is needed.

**The real enemies of the
British Army become not the
IRA and Soviets, but the
Navy and Airforce**

Defence Planning

Behind a screen of secrecy and a facade of strategic continuity British defence policy has gone through a series of radical transformations in the postwar period and it seems



inevitable that these transformations will continue. Since the Korean War, the poor performance of the British economy and the rapidly rising real costs of military goods and services have repeatedly forced Britain to adjust its defence policy towards that appropriate for an impoverished minor European nation. It has been economic pressures not political choices which have caused Britain to abandon imperial aspirations, withdraw from East of Suez, reduce the size of its forces and cancel a whole sequence of gradiose weapons systems. Not only were these transformations not the result of political choice, they were rarely planned. The major defence reviews which implemented these adjustments at roughly five year intervals were usually hasty responses to inevitable but unpredicted clashes between escalating weapons costs and fiscal crises.

With the retreat from East of Suez in the late 1960s, British military policy focussed on the European theatre, and during the 1970s security doctrine was organised around the concept of a structure of balanced forces. Within this structure each service consumes a roughly equal portion of the budget and within each service a wide range of combat missions is covered. Fighting capability is provided to meet four major roles which together account for the bulk of the budget. These roles are:

- the semi-independent 'strategic' nuclear forces of Polaris, to be replaced by Trident;
- the immediate defence of the UK by the home forces including those in Northern Ireland;
- air and land forces in West Germany;
- naval forces in the eastern Atlantic and Channel.

To maintain this balance in the face of economic pressures, the navy bore the main brunt of the 1981 cuts, since it benefitted from the decision to purchase Trident.

But even these four roles will not all be sustainable for long. Since Britain's economic performance is worsening, since the military inflation rate is still about 2% greater than the general rate of price increase, and since the changes made in the 1981 Defence Review were rather marginal it is reasonable to expect another crisis in the next two or three years, and another major cut in the British order of battle, irrespective of the government in power.

The first signals of the next crisis are already appearing. British forces in Germany are reported to have new equipment which they are unable to use for lack of fuel.

NATO is complaining that on present plans RAF front line forces will be reduced by over 100 planes during this decade. Pressure for another defence review is growing, and in this context the Trident decision is crucial.

The consequences of Trident

A decision by whatever government, to maintain cash limits which allow no more than slowly rising real defence expenditure and to proceed with Trident would lead to remarkable changes in the UK defence posture. The cost of Trident is likely to be so vast that on any plausible defence budget it will displace a large number of other military activities. The 1980 estimate of £5.6 billion for Trident, at prices then ruling, is only about half the figure now being discussed. This escalation arises for a number of reasons. The cost of the components bought from the US were priced at the 1980 exchange rate of about 2.40 rather than the much lower current rate. The 1980 calculations were based on buying the C-4 missile, rather than the larger D-5, which Reagan has now opted for. Not only is the D-5 likely to be substantially more expensive, but we will not know for a couple of years how much more expensive, since it is still under development. Persisting with the C-4 is not a viable option because the US will cease production of it in the 1990s when Trident is supposed to become operational, and the UK would lose all the benefits of commonality with the US system for most of Trident's life.

The D-5 will certainly need a larger submarine, which will be more expensive, and possibly a different nuclear power unit which will require further development expenditure. Even for the smaller submarines originally intended, extra construction capacity would have been required and the cost of this was not included in the estimate. With larger missiles and submarines the investment in construction facilities would be correspondingly greater. Although current estimates for the cost of Trident are for £11-12 billion, these contain an even larger margin of error than the original estimate. That was for a known and now operating system. The new estimate is for an ill-defined system under development, leaving greater scope for over-runs, development bugs, and general cost escalation.

Unless the defence budget was almost doubled, which would provoke strong political opposition and severe economic consequences, it would be impossible both to proceed with Trident and to maintain and equip the present UK force structures. Changes in the order of battle of at least the

magnitude of withdrawing and disbanding the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR) will be required to provide the resources for Trident. Britain would then move towards an arrangement like that of the French services in which nuclear capability is maintained only at the cost of very poor quality and badly equipped conventional forces. It seems unlikely that even a Conservative government would adopt this course, since the strategic utility of Trident is so marginal and the adjustments required elsewhere would be so major. There would also be serious opposition from the other services. It seems more probable that were the Tories to win the next election they would rapidly cancel Trident.

Party policies

It seems almost certain that a Labour or SDP government would cancel Trident and very likely that a Conservative government would. But whichever government next comes to power it seems likely that they would present the decision as maintaining the continuity of British defence policies. Despite differences in rhetoric, there has been a broad consensus between the parties on defence policy in the UK. It is difficult to

British forces in Germany are reported to have new equipment which they are unable to use for lack of fuel

find significant differences between the defence policies implemented by past Labour and Conservative administrations and there is as yet little indication that a future government, Labour, Conservative, or SDP, would break with that consensus.

Whatever changes to military posture that financial and geopolitical reality make inevitable, the parliamentary parties still seem likely to adjust to them within the framework of the dominant ideology. This involves maintaining the existing orientation towards the Soviet threat, the extensive military collaboration with other European states and the subordination to US hegemony.

Even within this framework, however, it is possible that in the course of the technical changes required to reorganise and economise on force structures and weapons systems, a centrist-style Labour government might shift the perspective of policy somewhat. Given the incoherence and waste in British defence policy; the potential for manipulation of inter-service rivalries and internal bureaucratic conflicts; and the opportunity to take advantage of the lever-

¹See *Britain and Nuclear Weapons*, Lawrence Freedman, Macmillan 1980.



age provided by economic constraints, there is scope for shifts. Attempting to reform policy under the guise of rationalising provision has advantages for Labour politicians. It avoids a head-on confrontation with the dominant defence ideology, and it does not raise the most sensitive political issues on which the Left is divided, such as the perception of the USSR and the extent of common interests with Europe and the US. The disadvantage of this procedure is that it will depend on bureaucratic manoeuvring in which Labour politicians are likely to be outflanked by professional military bureaucrats, and quite likely to be co-opted by them. While, by refusing to confront the underlying political issues, the Labour leadership would cut themselves off from the movement which maintains their morale, provides their backbone and gives them their bureaucratic bargaining power.

Other options

While there is very little evidence to suggest that a shift in British defence policy is likely, it is possible that cancellation of Trident could be sufficiently traumatic to 'break the mould' of the British military consensus. Whether it results from economic or political pressures and whichever government does it, cancellation would be a major boost to the morale of the peace movement. It is possible that the momentum created by the cancellation of Trident and the other changes enforced by economic necessity could be used as a springboard for a major new political movement. Scrapping Trident would reinforce the campaign to scrap Polaris (which requires large expenditures for new motors) and to prevent the UK

the peace movement mobilises almost exclusively around proposals to scrap systems and withdraw forces

basing of Cruise missiles. In the case of Cruise it is unlikely that economic pressures would work in the campaign's favour, since the cost is negligible. However, reliability problems and technical difficulties may provide powerful additional arguments against their deployment. While the main thrust of the campaign must be taken by points of principle, the leverage provided by technical and economic arguments should not be ignored. The next step would be to fight for the removal of all warheads from nuclear capable systems like the V bombers, Tornado, ASW helicopters and artillery. Longer term goals would involve closing US bases in the UK, withdrawal of BAOR, and leaving either NATO's integrated military command, as France did, or the whole political structure as well. The specific military measures listed could also lead to substantial reductions in the size of the armed forces and in defence expenditure.

Necessary as they are, specific military proposals of this sort are inadequate on their own. Although, at the moment the peace movement mobilises almost exclusively around weapons-based proposals geared to scrapping systems and withdrawing forces, this focus has severe disadvantages, because it does not provide a general framework for opposition.

The fact that in the present political climate the Left's defence proposals appear utopian, reflects the hegemony of the pre-

vailing ideology. And this hegemony persists despite the fact that opinion polls, demonstrations, and CND membership show the breadth of disaffection among the electorate with current defence policy. To transform this potential constituency into a politically effective force would require the development of a coherent alternative which counters the prevailing ideology, justifies specific proposals and provides a framework within which detailed choices can be made. Such an alternative security policy would play a similar role to the alternative economic strategy in providing an essential weapon in mobilising mass support and challenging existing doctrines. The development of an alternative security policy would provide a common focus for a wide range of disparate groups who share a common concern about the suicidal implications of present policy.

But just as the alternative economic strategy cannot be narrowly economic, an alternative security policy could not be narrowly military. The major issues in defence policy do not merely involve military questions, but are inherently intertwined with perceptions of the role and status of the UK in world affairs and with conceptions of British foreign policy. At the moment there is a considerable body of work going on within the peace movement, the Alternative Defence Commission, the Labour Party and other political groups towards the definition of such a strategy. The effectiveness of the strategy would of course be increased if it could be linked to more general moves to European Nuclear Disarmament and non-alignment.

There are a variety of forms the strategy could take. It could be based on closer integration with a non-aligned Europe or independent isolated neutrality by the UK. It could rely on conventional, territorial or non-violent means of defence. But whatever

Disarmament is invariably presented as costing jobs

its form, its function is to provide a framework which relates general conceptions of foreign policy to specific military questions such as weapons acquisitions and force structures.

The problems

Rather than examine specific proposals here, it may be more useful to consider some of the questions the alternative security policy must be able to deal with. These are the major issues on which crucial choices must be made, and which will be the focus of attacks made by opponents. There seem to

be four key issues. These relate to how the alternative security policy would deal with: the question of the 'Soviet threat'; the status of existing commitments; the problems of economic adjustment; and the difficulties of implementation of an alternative.

The 'Soviet threat'

With respect to the Soviet Union, the Left has in many ways implicitly accepted the establishment definition of the question. On this basis one must be either for or against the Soviet Union. A crucial element in the development of an alternative security policy will be making an independent judgement on the nature of the Soviet state and the extent to which it poses a military threat to the UK. It is important to recognise that these two questions are distinct. It is possible to have a negative view of the Soviet state — for example as a reactionary and militaristic social structure which oppresses those within its sphere of influence — and yet at the same time to see it as posing no threat to the UK because, for instance, of the inherent conservatism of its geriatric leadership and the fragility of its productive base.

While in principle the issues of the nature of the Soviet state and the Soviet threat are distinct, in practice the establishment treats them as inseparable. Moreover, Poland, Afghanistan, SS20s, and the incursion of a nuclear armed submarine into Swedish waters all provide apparent evidence for this prevailing ideology. And such issues are exploited by the establishment to promote a militaristic response, including knee-jerk rearmament and support for the US. Now even if sections of the public accept that the Soviet Union does represent some kind of threat, the militaristic response is still both wrong and dangerous. There do exist a variety of alternative defence philosophies other than pure pacifism, which would increase our security and reduce the risk of us becoming the victims of either US or USSR adventurism, and these should be explored in detail. In this respect we can learn a great deal from the neutral and non-aligned countries. It is important that the British public also share those lessons so that support for disarmament does not melt away with the first Soviet scare.

Existing commitments

A second question is the status of existing commitments. Here I am simply concerned with commitments to existing arms contracts and export orders rather than the numerous inter-state obligations like US bases in Britain. Since the lead times for weapons systems are so long there is likely to

be a considerable backlog of contracts.

For example British Aerospace and Rolls Royce are beginning the development of a new jet fighter for service in the late 1980s, the P-110, and an ultra short take-off and landing combat aircraft, the P103 for the 1990s. These will require commitments by the Ministry of Defence and RAF within the next year, and if this is given, large amounts

The major issues in defence policy do not involve merely military questions

of money will have been invested in development by the next election. Cancelling such contracts will be presented as wasting large amounts of money already sunk in the projects; causing the loss of many jobs; and incurring large cancellation fees, much of which will be due to foreign countries since many of these projects are collaborative. The difficulties involved will be greater because many of the arms firms are nationalised industries. Almost the whole of the aerospace and shipbuilding components of the defence industry plus large other parts are in public ownership. Given that there is a general philosophy to justify the breaking of these commitments and a suitable concern for the political treatment of the legal difficulties, most of these arguments can be reduced to the third prong of the attack — economic consequences.

Disarmament is invariably presented as costing jobs. In arguing for it, the bottom line tends to be that cuts in military expenditure reduce employment. Although this argument is prevalent and widely used by the establishment it is the weakest defence of military expenditure. Firstly there is strong evidence that a major factor in the UK's poor economic performance and rising unemployment is the burden that military expenditure has put on the economy through depressing investment, innovation and productivity growth. Secondly, various alternative corporate plans developed by workers; the experience after the Second World War and in other countries; and a number of detailed studies all indicate that with planning and appropriate macro-economic policies conversion from military to civil production can be implemented rapidly and effectively².

Implementation

Any government trying to implement an alternative strategy will face administrative harassment. Business as usual will continue without ministerial approval and when the military bureaucracy is forced to implement alternative policies it will be done in such a

way as to have politically damaging consequences. Ministers will find that the fishery patrol vessel they approved turns out to look remarkably like an aircraft carrier, and that every defence cut will have to fall on a marginal constituency. In these skirmishes financial and technical details plays a major role. By suitable choice of GDP and public expenditure projections, the price basis of the calculations, and the target base used, the Defence Ministry can turn what the politicians expected to be a reduction into a much increased out-turn. These tactics are well known, though Defence Ministers might learn from Conservative cash control innovations in other Departments, and the best defence against them is open government and wide involvement in decisions. Official secrecy is a major source of bureaucratic power, and wider provision of information will help demystify defence issues. But openness alone will not solve all the problems, structural changes within the military apparatus are also needed. Although, thinking about how to democratise and transform the armed services and the Ministry of Defence has hardly begun, encouragement of trade union membership in the forces and a reduction in their internal security and strike breaking role would contribute to it.

There seem to be a number of possible lessons from this exercise. Firstly, strategy and tactics must be integrated within a developed philosophy. This provides the vision for an alternative security policy and a structure which can be used to challenge the prevailing ideology. A list of specific proposals without a coherent framework is almost certain to be inadequate. Secondly, any such philosophy must be developed within a mass movement, it cannot be

Official secrecy is a major source of bureaucratic power

imposed by experts from above. The success of any attempt to transform British defence policy in the face of opposition from the military bureaucracy will depend on the breadth of popular support. Such support will only be forthcoming if there is wide involvement in the development of policy. Thirdly, the tactics of the individual political battles will depend on the command of details of military technology, legality and economics. Expertise will be an indispensable subordinate to a philosophy and a movement in the battle. □

²These issues are discussed at greater length in Dan Smith and Ron Smith, *The Economics of Militarism*, Pluto Press, spring 1982.

Mario Nuti

Poland's Economic Mess

Mounting debts, declining production, rising prices, food shortages: Poland's economic problems are dire.



The critical state of the Polish economy, which had given Solidarity a powerful political lever and Jaruzelski a plausible pretext for military rule, continues to affect the course of Polish events. The Military Council of National Salvation has already taken those unpopular austerity measures — formerly tenaciously resisted by the new political and trade union movement — which are indispensable for economic recovery: a return to a 42-hour 6-day working week, the reduction of rations, and above all a drastic increase in the price of consumption goods, particularly foodstuffs and heating. The military have also gone ahead with partial reform of the system of industrial organisation and planning, implementing those parts of the reform project which did not clash with military rule, such as dissolving large associations of enterprises operating in the same sector (but suspending self-management for the time being). In spite of the return to work and the end of strikes, however, these measures on their own are not sufficient to achieve economic reconstruction and recovery. The reopening of negotiations with elected workers' representatives and the achievement of some kind of political-economic compromise — desirable *per se* — are an essential precondition in order to avoid passive resistance in factories, normalise agricultural supplies and reactivate trade and financial links with the

West. For a change, economic constraints can play a positive role.

Deepening crisis

In 1981 national income in Poland fell by 15% ie, back to the 1974 level. Money wages rose 25%, and so did prices, but consumption supplies fell by 10%, leading to a further increase in the already large amount of unspendable cash in the hands of the population, not matched by goods in the shops. Industrial output fell by 13%, back to the 1976 level; agricultural output rose by 4% with respect to 1980, but this was a bad year, and this important sector was back to the 1972 level; besides, food procurements by the state slumped (meat by 25%). Martial law has worsened this picture, by reducing both industrial production (because of passive resistance, shortage of imported materials and sheer disorganisation of the planning system) and the marketing of foodstuffs.

Already in 1981 the suspension of investment programmes, lack of energy, raw materials and imported goods, had generated a labour surplus in some industries (building, machinery, metallurgy), exacerbated by attempts at rationalisation. At the same time, labour shortages prevailed in mining and agriculture. The Planning Commission envisaged the redeployment of 175,000 workers in 1981, 262,000 in 1982, 223,000 in 1983, and Labour Minister Anton Rajkiewicz indicated that in the near future 180,000 workers would have been dismissed from industrial enterprises, 150,000 from the building industry and 60,000 from transport. It was expected that 90,000 new entrants into the labour market would not have found a job. The presence of a substantial labour surplus — which economists put at over one million people — was also revealed by measures for early retirement, part-time labour, and generous incentives for transferring to the private sector. At the same time productive capacity was underutilised by 30-35%, with peaks of over 50%, so that capital was also 'unemployed' because of structural problems and the lack of imported goods (from steel cans to distilled water, and not only advanced technology) on which Poland had become exceedingly dependent.

External debt

Polish external debt, by the end of 1981, had reached 25.5 billion dollars with Western banks and governments, plus 4.7 billion dollars with the socialist bloc. This is no more than 1% of the value of Polish established coal reserves (if they were dug out of the ground and transported to Hamburg — a big if), or two-year cost of

in which case there is no doubt that Warsaw Pact troops would intervene

unemployment in Britain at the present rate; it was also, however, an amount substantially greater than the whole reserves of the Bank of England, and more than twice the level of debt that the Polish economy could cope with in normal conditions.

In the actual conditions, Poland not only could not repay debt as it matured but could not even pay all interests. On 26 March 1981 Poland stopped repayment of maturing debt and the amounts still outstanding were rescheduled for repayment over eight years with a four year grace period, but this arrangement was conditional on Poland paying up 500 million dollars overdue interest still outstanding, before the end of 1981; another 800 million dollars were still owing to Western governments for 1981. Polish gold and hard currency reserves, on the other hand, stood at a miserly 228 million dollars. (Of that 500 million dollars overdue interest, 200 millions were paid round the end of the year after military rule, apparently out of Soviet aid; Poland has promised to pay up the remaining 300

millions by mid-February). Another 6.5 billion dollars are maturing in 1982, plus another 3 billion interest; Poland needs to reschedule these maturities as well, and find fresh funds for paying interest. Trade balance with the West was reached at the end of 1981, but at the cost of a 30% fall in imports from the West, and parallel fall in industrial output and income. The external constraint, and above all the loss, in the course of 1981, of at least 1.5 billion dollars of short term loans not renewed by Western bankers, is the major cause of the Polish economic collapse in 1981. By withdrawing short term support, bankers have behaved wisely from their individual viewpoint, but collectively they have undermined the viability of their debtor and damaged their own collective interest.

Huge shortages

External imbalance was accompanied by an enormous internal imbalance, under the guise of open inflation (10% in 1980 and 25% in 1981) but above all of 'repressed' inflation, ie, endemic shortages of consumption goods, including necessities, rationing (which however was not covered by supplies, and therefore coexisted with queues and inflation), hyperinflation in the black market. US dollars, officially worth 33.5 zlotys until the end of 1981, had reached

Ultimately Polish generals are in the hands of Polish miners and workers, and Western bankers and governments

15 times their official value on the black market. Already in the autumn there was literally nothing at all in the shops; the population would buy immediately at unrealistically low prices anything put on the market, and would redistribute it through barter, while the national currency was replaced as a unit of account, means of payment and store of value, by foreign currency, cigarettes, alcohol. By the end of the year the population held over 1 billion zlotys in liquid assets of which only a small fraction was voluntarily held; the rest was simply unspendable, and corresponded — at the official exchange rate — to the level of external debt. There can be no doubt that the wage increases obtained at Gdansk in August 1980, raising incomes by a third while consumption supply fell by 20% in sixteen months, had caused directly the total disruption of consumption markets. Gross profits had fallen to zero in the socialised sector over the first three quarters of 1981. No more than two thirds of current incomes were covered by consumption goods, and the deficit was cumulated at a fast rate. Strikes and labour unrest cannot have done much damage: according to official sources 10,500,000 working hours were lost in 1981 through strikes, ie, less than an hour per worker per year; even if hours lost had been ten times as great, output could not have suffered much. But the free Saturday and the reduction of the working week, which had caused a fall of 7.5% in hours worked, must have had a deleterious effect on the state of supplies, directly and through its effect on coal output and exports.

In this situation, the systematic refusal by Solidarity to accept austerity measures and price increases, and the government's inability to go ahead without Solidarity's consent, had given great power to the new movement. The economic measures taken by the military government had been prepared and discussed for at least six months, and some (like the devaluation of the zloty and the increase in the price of industrial inputs) had been announced long beforehand. The price increases decreed on 1 February — by 241% on food and 171% on heating — appear exorbitant but apart from being partly compensated by compensatory wage increases and the revaluation of savings one should remember that as long as consumption supplies are maintained, even large price increases do not imply a fall in the

standard of living, where there is a large unsatisfied demand before the increase. The new prices simply correspond to the harsh reality of Polish consumption supplies. The price increases are a step in the right direction.

The necessity of compromise

Economic recovery, however, cannot be achieved by military decree. The military can force the return to work by coercion or by positive inducement — such as the distribution of clothing and food in the place of work — but are completely powerless against workers' passive resistance in factories. Absenteeism, sabotage, obstructionism, the Italian-style 'refusal to work' can still worsen further the economic situation, prolong and harden the state of emergency, which in turn would inflict new economic losses through economic sanctions. The suspension of self-management is also economically damaging, not so much because self-management might improve efficiency, but because it was always understood, in negotiations with Solidarity, that this could be the political counterpart of economic austerity. Peasants are also beyond the reach of the military; barring requisition, which would destroy future prospects of food supply, peasants cannot be forced to feed the towns, and indeed the possibility of bread shortages in the spring looms large for Polish consumers.

No matter how strong and reliable the Polish army and security forces may be, ultimately Polish generals are in the hands of Polish miners and workers, and Western bankers and governments. The plan for 1982 — now set aside — contained a pessimistic version and an optimistic one according to assumptions about coal output and trade with the West. The difference between 175 and 155 million tons of coal output (against 203 million in 1979 and 163 in 1981), and between balanced trade with the West or the necessity of running 1.2 million dollar surplus, in the 1982 plan imply a difference between +2.2% growth or -8.3% decline in income produced, and an even stronger difference in income distributed (respectively -1 and -15.6%). Thus it is imperative for the military to come to an accommodation, to a compromise which would enjoy a minimum degree of popular consensus necessary to persuade miners to dig coal, peasants to sow, and Western governments and bankers to continue with aid, trade and loans. Otherwise the shortage of coal for power stations and exports, food shortages, the lack of imported materials and semi-finished products, in the course of a few months

Strikes and labour unrest cannot have done much damage — less than an hour per worker per year

will precipitate an economic crisis of such proportions as to unleash popular protest and revolt of a type familiar from Northern Ireland or El Salvador, in which case there is no doubt that Warsaw Pact troops would intervene.

Polish workers and military men, and Western bankers and governments, are playing the last hand of a dangerous game in which either they all win, in which case an economic recovery can still take place, Western credits are protected and at least part of the political achievements of the after-August can be preserved; or they all lose, with Poland starving under Soviet occupation, Western financial circles are disrupted by the write-off of Polish debt, American Mid-West farmers lose markets, and Western firms lose sales of gas equipment and access to Soviet gas. The lesson of Poland's 'state of war' is that intransigence does not pay; unfortunately, there is still no sign that that lesson has been learned by the protagonists of this painful story, in Poland and outside.

BERTOLUCCI AND ITALIAN CINEMA

Margaret Tarratt

To most people, Bernardo Bertolucci is best known as the director of *Last Tango in Paris*, much publicised for its explicit sex scenes involving Marlon Brando, although seen by Bertolucci himself as a political film involving the male/female power struggle. He is also the director of such dazzling and controversial films as the *The Conformist*, 1900 and

La Luna and his films have been financed from international sources. His latest film, *Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man*, is the first he has made in Italian for a decade. In the opening sequence Bertolucci's hero, decked out in fancy dress of yachting cap and binoculars, surveys his surroundings from his factory roof — a ship's captain on dry



From 1900

From *The Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man*



land — and in a much admired scene, witnesses the kidnapping of his only son by supposedly left wing guerillas. The sailing motif is no coincidence for, as Bertolucci commented: 'A movie is the adventure really of jumping on a boat and going with a wind that takes you nowhere.' It is this journey 'nowhere' that has baffled and irritated the British critics.

Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man is the story of a middle-aged former peasant from the Po Valley, now the owner of a prosperous cheese factory, whose life is disrupted when he is faced with having to sell his goods to pay his son's ransom. The son, soon identified as a left wing activist himself, may or may not have been party to his own kidnapping, which is something the father has to come to terms with. Rebelling against the payoff, he finds a substitute for the son he now believes to be dead in an ambitious programme of surreptitiously investing the ransom money he has raised in his factory. As Bertolucci has said himself: 'The only value is buying and selling'. His sympathy with his peasant hero, so unresponsive to political seduction, has led him to make a film which for all its sensitivity to landscape, has an exceptionally rambling and confused narrative meaningful only in its specifically Italian context. Inevitably, critics of all complexions have ruefully agreed that this film is a failure, showing either the decay of a once vital talent or, more optimistically, the transition to the era of 'late Bertolucci'.

In a sense, the critics' uneven response to Bertolucci's films throughout his career has reflected expectation both raised and dashed about Italian cinema in general since the end of World War Two. From the late forties to the sixties, Italian cinema seemed to have qualities both innately 'Italian' but also generally relevant. For many, the neo-realism of such famous films as *Bicycle Thieves*, *Rome Open City* and *La Terra Trema*, which were shot on the streets, away from the studio, with non-professional actors, seemed particularly appropriate to the post-war years. In most cases, such films, in contrast to the 'white telephone' productions of the Mussolini era looked at aspects of working class life. To international audiences involved in attempts to rebuild and perhaps restructure their societies, neo-realist cinema had an extraordinary immediacy. When the authorities clamped down on the movement as detrimental to Italy's international image, directors such as Fellini with his scandalous look at decadent cosmopolitan life in Rome, *La Dolce Vita*, and Michelangelo Antonioni with his much discussed trilogy starring Monica Vitti — *L'Aventura*, *La Notte* and

The Eclipse — successfully diverted attention to the wealthy upper classes as they witnessed the emotionally painful but inevitable moral and social change accompanying technological advance — a theme dear to the sixties. Yet, significantly, when Antonioni made films outside Italy, examining aspects of British society in *Blow Up* or the dilemma of the American revolutionary in *Zabriskie Point*, his reputation diminished. His observation became more stereotyped and less exact than in his Italian films.

Bertolucci's appearance on the scene with *Before the Revolution* (1964) and *Partner* (1968) caused him to be hailed as the Italian Jean-Luc Godard, establishing him at once as an 'international' director with a political awareness but also as a true Italian. Bertolucci did recognise Godard (the foremost director of the Left to emerge for the French New Wave movement) as one of his 'many fathers' with the hostility as well as the admiration that this relationship entails (In *The Conformist*, where the hero goes to Paris to kill a professor, the address and phone number were those of Godard: 'It was as if I were killing Jean-Luc'). but if Bertolucci's early films delved into his country's recent history and appeared to draw political conclusions, he was also indeniably, and rather like Pasolini, an artist, a poet who at the age of 21 won Italy's highest award for poetry, a filmmaker who made free use of the works of classic authors as the basis for his films (Stendhal in *Before the Revolution*, Moravia in *The Conformist*, Dostoevsky in *The Spider's Stratagem*). Like Roland Barthes, he believed a film should seduce its audience from the outset. Bertolucci's characteristic undulating camera-work disorient the audience while his stylised compositions mask their content rather than reveal it. At times, his visual inspiration lay in paintings (Magritte for *The Spider's Stratagem* or Francis Bacon for *Last Tango in Paris*). But the political climate of 1968 had a profound effect on Bertolucci's attitude to his work. A communist 'since the age of seven' he now officially joined the party and also came to the conclusion that his films must reach a wider audience. he assumed total responsibility for his scripts, rejected ideas of dramatic 'alienation' as being, for him, a barrier to emotional communication with his audience and began to make 'international' films in which the political content was not readily perceived.

After the astonishing success of *Last Tango*, Bertolucci found a ready audience for his international films *1900* and *La Luna* but, as in the case of Antonioni, suffered a decline in reputation and became a rather

suspect figure, considered by some to have been bought off by success. To be notorious, however, is preferable to having no international reputation at all which is the fate of many Italian film makers whose films travel no further than their country of origin. Italian cinema in the seventies received scant attention in Britain. The dearth of Italian films imported, or books on the subject means that at present it is virtually a lost era for English language audiences. The achievement of Italian film makers in keeping their films in the international eye without sacrificing Italian flavour has not been maintained. Distributors currently complain of the 'hermetic' nature of modern Italian cinema, or, alternatively, of the greed of Italian producers who prevent foreign distribution because of the inordinately high prices they ask. Established names from the sixties such as Francesco Rosi or Ermanno Olmi have been, to some extent, represented on British screens with films like *Three Brothers* and *Tree of Wooden clogs* (though we have still to

see Rosi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* over here). A director such as Marco Bellochio however has been one of the biggest casualties of this indifference to Italian achievement in the cinema. Bellochio's *Victory March* (1976) by all accounts is a major omission; his *Salto nel Vuoto* was shown at the 1980 London Film Festival and more recently on television but did not gain distribution. *Il Gabiano* has not been seen here at all. Of the unknown younger generation of film directors, Nano Moretti got British distribution for his much admired film *Ecce Bombo* but there seem to be no current plans for exhibition and it is thought to be 'too parochial' for British audiences.

With *Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man*, Bertolucci looks squarely at a contemporary Italian subject. Its weaknesses (mainly Bertolucci's self-indulgence script) are manifest. Nevertheless, it could be a good sign for the renewal of foreign interest in Italian cinema that one of its major, bankable names is now looking homeward again. □

DR HOGGART'S FAREWELL Peter Smith

Although Richard Hoggart is upset at having been dropped as vice-chair of the Arts Council he is deriving comfort from the frisson of martyrdom that comes from the knowledge that the decision to axe him was taken by Margaret Thatcher. Why should she be bothered about the vice-chair of the Arts Council?

The Arts Council proper consists of a chairperson, currently Kenneth Robinson, and twenty members. These twenty-one people are allegedly appointed by the Minister for the Arts in the name of the Secretary of State for Education and Science. The vice-chairperson of the Council is filled from among the members of the Council — in other words, they vote one of themselves into the job. The running of the Arts Council's work is carried out by full-time officers under the direction of the secretary-general, currently Sir Roy Shaw, a friend of Richard Hoggart. Both of them are working-class lads made good and both are centre-Labour in politics. Generally a Council member serves three years and then is dropped. There is meant to be a steady turnover in membership to prevent the Council from ossifying.

Hoggart had served six years. The last two were served as vice-chair. It was expected that Hoggart would be asked to stay on a year or so more because in a few months' time chairperson Kenneth Robinson (and now a member of the SDP) retires. It was thought that all the powers that be would recognise the expediency of keeping Hoggart on to give a continuity of leadership. And, irrespective of what one thinks of Hoggart's political or artistic views, he has had the guts to lead with his chin: he was the Arts Council's 'hit man'. He wrote many articles defending the Council's work and policy and has been publicly critical of the manner in which the press deals with the issue of public funding for the arts. Yet, whilst Hoggart has scorned rightwing critics like George Gale, the pugilist columnist of the *Daily Express*, he has been equally scornful of issues dear to the Left. Hoggart is sceptical about ideas for democratising the Arts Council; he is critical of the community arts policy (which the Arts Council during the last two years has devolved to the regional arts associations); and wary of jumping in too far with multi-cultural arts. He is not a radical. But, when the Arts Council had to

make its cuts to forty-one organisations last year it was Hoggart who argued in public that the blame lay with the Government and not the Council.

There is no real mystery about his departure. Consider that the person whom the Government must have in mind to replace Robinson is bound to be a Conservative and most probably connected with business or finance. S/he will be a person who will want to mute criticism of the Government. Until now, aided and abetted by Hoggart, Roy Shaw (and Robinson) have been quite vocal in attacking the Government and since Shaw could not be dismissed the alliance had to be broken up by seizing the first opportunity for dropping Hoggart. Hoggart was dished as much by his friendship with Shaw as for his politics. Roy Shaw is now much on his own. And whilst the Government is unlikely to feel threatened by attacks on its arts policy it must stop or damp down criticism of its financial policy wherever possible. It remains to be seen whether Thatcher is also intent on trying to curb Arts Council funding in the more 'radical' areas of its work. (Incidentally, any hope that the Council will replace Hoggart with a 'leftish' member can be quashed by the fact that the appointment

of vice-chair needs the Government's approval.)

The side issue to this is Paul Channon. Channon is the Arts Minister, responsible for the Office of Arts and Libraries which is a broom cupboard of the Department of Education and Science. Channon's predecessor, Norman St John-Stevas, took the Arts ministry away from the DES and started developing it into an autonomous entity but when Stevas was sacked the Arts went back to the DES. However, Channon was proud that, despite being a junior minister in the DES, he had a letter from the Prime Minister guaranteeing his 'independence' in all matters relating to the arts. Yet it was not Channon's wish to drop Hoggart; and it is not Channon's civil servants who carried out a trawl for replacement members for Hoggart and other vacancies. Sir Keith Joseph is the Minister who is doing the Prime Minister's bidding. Channon's letter from Thatcher says that he has the right of direct access to her. Presumably she shouts 'Boyl' and Paul comes running. It is bad news for the arts because it is a watering down of the arm's length principle that kept the arts a safe(ish) distance from Government. □

RIOTING ON THE MEDIA

Justin Wren-Lewis
and Alan Clarke

On Wednesday 25 November 1981, a report on the inner cities and their policing hit the headlines, as no similar report had ever done before. ITN was temporarily out of action but both the evening BBC news programmes devoted far more time to it than usual for a headline story, while discussions of the report took up most of *Nationwide* and *Newsnight*, as well as dominating the news in the following morning's press. Yet, as we approach the anniversary of what the *Daily Express* called 'The Riot that shook Britain' the problems of the inner cities and their

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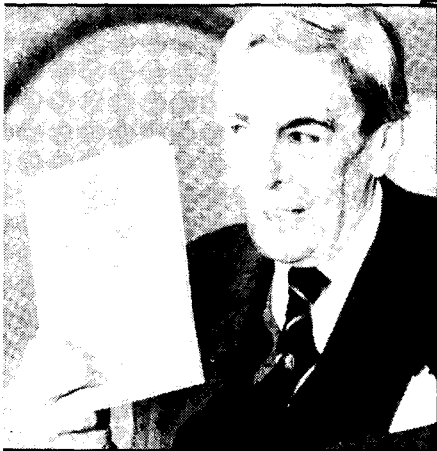
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The five women and four men in the book are all Lee Centre members.



policing, after the brief blaze of publicity following the publication of the Scarman Report, have left the news headlines.

This silence tells us much about the character and significance of the news media's treatment of Scarman's findings; treatment that failed to question either the report's importance or its authoritative status. Two important factors facilitated this celebration of Scarman; firstly, the nature of its *visual* representation, and, more generally, the position it occupied in relation to the summer riots, a narrative it succeeded in closing.

The Scarman Report had two main concerns — the social conditions fermenting unrest in Britain's inner cities, and the character of policing in those areas. Yet, when both television and the press reproduced the Report as a news story, the pictures and film footage used gave it a quite different orientation. Viewers and readers were subjected to a plethora of shots of dramatic riot scenes from Brixton and Toxteth. Rather than broadening the Report out and looking at the wider implication of the findings, the immediacy of the visuals — of the rioting, the looting and of the violence — pull us back into the problems of law and order, of maintaining peace on our streets. This visual commentary is extremely seductive — it seems to remind us of the problems.

The issues at stake shift from examination of societal problems toward straightforward recrimination. The questions surrounding urban poverty and policing methods become a question of guilt — who did Scarman blame for the riots? BBC News opened the Scarman story by answering this very question, while the headline of the *Daily Star*, for example, screamed 'GUILTY' in block capitals across its front page, above a riot scene photograph.

Two notable exceptions demonstrate that the Scarman story could have been signified with far more appropriate visuals. In a centre page feature in the *Daily Star*, the

story of Sonia, a black inhabitant of Brixton, was illustrated with a shot through a window of derelict, run down South London, while BBC's *Newsnight* used a long camera shot panning along one of Brixton's less than salubrious streets.

Television news was also conspicuous in its failure to use appropriate film to signify racist or oppressive policing. Although instances of racial harassment have been filmed — following, for example, the police raid on Brixton's Railton Road in the summer — this film was ignored. When summarising Scarman's recommendations, we were shown pictures of policemen standing on a street corner to represent the caption condemning racial prejudice, of policemen bearing riot shields over a caption advocating reform of the police complaints procedure. The conditions described in the Report were referred to but not seen. The news coverage in this respect failed to make the distinction between what lies behind the Scarman Report as a news story — the riots — and what constituted the substance of the Report itself — namely, problems in the day to day policing of areas like Brixton.

This leads us on to a more general point concerning the position of the Scarman story in a much longer narrative. The Scarman Report heralded the much anticipated end of a new story, a story that had begun its television life six months earlier on April 11, the first night of the rioting in Brixton. Although, for many, the disturbances in Brixton formed part of a history of deprivation and poor policing, their appearance on our TV screens came as if from out of the blue. The absence of this history on television gave the riot an enigmatic quality.

Both BBC and ITN ended their news reports that evening with questions rather than answers — 'The arguments about why and how the violence erupted will continue . . .' (BBC); 'on a night when nearly fifty police have been injured, the questions have

only just begun' (ITN). These questions were amplified following further troubles in July. As the debates about why it happened continued, so the quest for a voice to provide an authoritative answer, a solution redefining right and wrong became more urgent. Lord Scarman was seen to be that voice. When Scarman reported, the story closed like a judicial sentence once the verdict has been given.

In this context, it is not surprising that the Report received so much publicity and so little criticism. Even the editorial comments in the national press agree that the report was, as the *Telegraph* put it, 'mostly sensible', despite some qualms from the *Express* and *Daily Mail* about the concept of positive discrimination. The contradictory elements of the Report allowed commentators of various political persuasions to adopt Scarman's truths to support their own. Thus, when Timothy Raison and Roy Hattersley discussed the Report on *Newsnight*, both were keen to stress their differences lay not with its findings, but with their interpretations of those findings — like theologians debating Biblical admonitions.

It was as if Scarman was the only investigation of its kind (exhaustive rather than partial) rather than merely one of many. From this privileged position Scarman was able to discredit other reports. On *Nation-wide*, he unambiguously implied (an inference taken up by the *Telegraph*) that the report commissioned by Lambeth Council under David Turner Samuels QC 'had created a tremendous amount of tension and hostility toward the police in January . . . and then there was a build up from then' to the April riots.

Because Scarman was seen to provide the last word on the problems of Britain's inner cities, the story completely disappeared from the news headlines the following day, and has been seen little since. This allowed the Police Federation to get away with a rapid conversion to the notion of an independent complaints procedure, and then a retraction once the Scarman Report had left the limelight.

To have presented the Report as the truth was to overlook contradictions inherent in the Report itself — like the disassociation between social conditions and government spending — and the limitations of the Report — crucially, a large number of significant groups boycotted the whole proceedings. By attempting to use Scarman to close the news story of the Summer of Discontent, the opportunity to learn from the Report and to open the area to more public scrutiny seems to have been lost in television. □

Discussion

Dafyd Elis Thomas

Mother Wales, get off me back?

Raymond Williams said that if it could have been done by talking, Wales could have been a socialist republic in the twenties. Now, sixty years on and three years after non-devolution, the talking carries on, though the subject is negative, how we got neither socialist nor national liberation. We have probably had more workshops, conferences, fraternal arguments, and good rows about socialism and the national question in the last five to six years than Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. No contributor to this national conversation has been at once as scathing, analytical, pessimistic, prophetic, and finally cataclysmic, (there my rhetoric runs out, because anyway I've got nothing on his) than Gwyn Williams. His *Marxism Today* piece (December 1981) originally delivered at the first CUL in Cardiff, has already become itself a reference text in the whole argument. What is not yet clear is whether all our talk around a revived Marxism and socialism, and a reformulated national question, is a talking to death, or a 'talking cure'.

To ask explicit questions about nationality (not in the legal state sense, but in the Eastern European understanding of the *nationalities* question) is not some kind of national 'identity' crisis. Raymond Williams again:

in *Politics and Letters* he explains succinctly the historical reasons why and how the national question of Wales is asked. He regards the problematic element as characteristic, where virtually all Welsh people ask themselves what it is to be Welsh, and what Wales actually is. This is explained by the way in which Wales was incorporated into 'Britain' (his quotation marks) before it developed a separate national identity. It therefore had a 'cultural' rather than a 'national' existence. I would want to qualify that analysis by adding *national political* existence. One of the problems of the English Left is that the national question of England is so taken as read it is not asked. This means that the whole historical process of the construction of the British state as a multinational state, whose multiness has been suppressed by a mainly English ruling class, is not perceived. When Gwyn Williams says that the problems we face in Wales are British problems and that in Wales those British problems assume exaggerated and distorted form he is of course right. But Britishness itself as the name of a clapped-out post-Imperialist, but still aggressively capitalist culture (or rather dominant culture), is as much of a problem as Welshness. What Welsh writers, such as Raymond Williams and Gwyn Williams in very different ways, can bring to understanding the political cultures of Britain is a particularly acute awareness brought about by the consciousness of the tensions between class/nation/state/language/cultures.

English nationalism

The relative inability of the Left in England, until recently, to face up to what is called the 'Irish question' (but is in reality the question of the relation between class/nation/nationality/state) is the most acute example of the failure to understand the historical process which made, and is unmaking, 'Britain'. The deconstruction of English nationalism

becomes even more urgent as racism becomes more apparent within our society, phenomenon recently demonstrated in *Labour and Racism* (by Annie Phizackle and Robert Miles) not to be confined to right wing movements, but to be a fundamental in-built part of the structure of British state institutions. As that state itself finds itself increasingly unable to manage its deepening capitalist crisis, the contradictions and divisions inherent in the way it was historically constructed can only become more acute. Though clearly in response to such a drive there is also a contradictory drive for 'national unity' constructed on the basis of centrist and centralised social democracy. The unpalatable facts to anyone who is sensitive to the inter-relation between class and national questions, is that the vocabulary and discourse of even left politics in Britain makes its appeals as much to a nationalist discourse, as to a socialist one. To this must be added an increasingly ethnocentric Europeanism, which is in reality a form of extended 'continental' nationalism. It seems to me that the denial of class politics, and its 'national' (including Euro-national) position which is at the core of the SDP appeal makes it the authentic voice of English nationalism. The fact that English nationalism does not specify itself as such, but applies the adjective *nationalist* only to those nationalisms which conflict with it (that is Irish, Welsh, Scottish) is not an indication of the absence of such an English nationalism but is rather a tribute to its over-dominance of the whole scene. A careful reading of Labour Party political statements, in particular the Callaghan appeals in the dying days of the last Labour administration, will reveal a continual reference to a 'national political stance. Indeed, many of the positions taken by Tony Benn in his *Argument for Democracy*, are grounded in a British 'national' position.

What I am saying is that not only do we want to analyse the specific class and national lines drawn on the map of Wales but we also need simultaneously to examine them as they are drawn in British history and that of necessity will mean examining both the internal lines, and the external lines: of capital and neo-imperialist domination.

Welsh Labourism

To return to the 'internal' politics of Wales some of us would want to push a comparison in terms of its 'one party' state, and massively undemocratic nationalised (ie British public sector, with the regimes of Eastern Europe. If East Germany calls itself 'actually existing socialism', the South Wales valleys are actually existing Labourism. Nothing has brought socialism more



to disrepute in Britain, except perhaps experiences in some parts of northern England, than the 'socialism' of the Labour Party in South Wales. Tony Benn is reported, or perhaps mis-reported, to have held a Labour Party fringe meeting that if he came from South Wales he would be a Welsh Nationalist because of what the Labour Party had done to South Wales. As I write this piece, the 'official national unemployment level' is 16.2%. Yet the right-back representation from official Labourism is virtually non-existent. Whereas the Labour Party in the GLC, the West Midlands, or Sheffield, are developing ERA-type forms of local socialism and social enterprise, apart from a Wales TUC initiative on co-operatives, none of the Labour-controlled authorities in Wales have initiated any such development. Labourism, clapped-out of economic and cultural life, and to many of us on the extra-Labour left, seems incapable of invigorating itself. Indeed, political education, and even perhaps thinking, or certainly radical thinking, has been actively discouraged in the Labour movement in Wales during the past forty years. In education policy Labour LEAs created bilateral comprehensive schools where most of the attention of Labour Right teachers went on preparing a 'grammar school' core for export only. Labour education policy has provided a quarter of secondary school kids in Wales with the 'opportunity' of leaving school without any certification, as compared with a 12% figure for England. At the same time 'industrial development policies', both by counties, and by the Labour-created Welsh Development Agency, was all about making Wales the 'open country', as the WDA advert has it, or branch factory capital, in particular to employ women at relatively cheaper wages. Work by Kevin Morgan on the actual impact of 'regional policy' and studies of the Welsh economy by Phil Cooke and Gareth Jones of UWIST have set out quite clearly

the actual impact of this policy. The Wales of 1982 is summed up by the Welsh Development Agency advert: to the hymn tune Cym Rhondda, are set new words, which are the names of multinationals established in Wales, and significantly, the hymn to multinational capital does not even rhyme! No National Eisteddfod prize for the WDA PR outfit.

This is not a case of a proud and utopian socialist mythology falling into disillusion, it is rather the actual destruction of the socialist idea itself by the practice of Labourism, which Wales faces.

The 'failure' of devolution has to be seen in the context of the Labourist politics which defined it. In the early 1970s a section of Welsh Labour, partly influenced by the bin-end of the participation policies of the 60s social democratic state, and partly as a response to protest-nationalism which had grasped the political emptiness of the delivery system without ammunition which was Labourist Welsh politics, proposed devolution. But it was proposed into a political culture which had been deliberately schooled out of autonomy. The referendum defeat was written into the very question itself, which became increasingly apparent to those of us who took some active part in the campaign, as the Labour Party in South Wales, in the case of devolution, as with most of its policies, failed either to campaign for or to implement what it supposedly 'believed in'. The Welsh electorate was set a question in an examination on national politics without the subject even being included on the political curriculum.

New stirrings

But Labour must not take the whole blame. As so often in conflicting political movements, supposedly in a combat with each other, the Labour Party created an antithetical Plaid Cymru which it in a sense deserved. The national question as advocated by the 'national party' in the 50s and 60s was constitutionalist, culturalist and

linguistic. A social democratic gloss of research and policy had been added, in typical technocratic fashion, in the late 60s and early 70s. Such social democratic national protest politics was able to create stirrings at by-elections, but could not make a substantial political shift in allegiances, particularly as it continually fudged class politics.

But even while the Labourist, and culturalist Plaid, devo-referendum strategy was visibly failing, in the militant section of the national movement itself, crucial changes were taking place. In Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, and the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement, socialist strategies were becoming increasingly obvious, as the only means of transforming public sector, and multinational capitalist, Wales into a popular democracy. The miners' next step was being re-read by the miners' children and grandchildren.

In 1981 the same change finally overtook Plaid Cymru itself with the establishment of a left group and the writing in of 'a Welsh Socialist State' into the party objectives, while deleting the bourgeois form 'self-government'. On the Labour Left, an alliance of the NUM and NUPE and the Wales Labour Co-ordinating Committee succeeded in stopping a Healeyist revived social contract, and a Wales alternative economic strategy is actively being written and re-written. The crucial task of re-building a Welsh socialist culture has begun. A crucial immediate step would be to build on the quasi-autonomy of the Wales TUC, but it must have a clear purpose, not merely the deploying of a rhetoric of 'social disorder'! The task is nothing short of a recreation of the socialist idea by an active working class Welsh politics. Acronyms are insufficient but WALES must mean not, as the hackneyed pun, a threatened species, but Workers' Alternative Local Economic Strategy — Welsh Action Leads to Establishing Socialism, and of course, the essential negation, Warning Against Left Embracing Separatism. □

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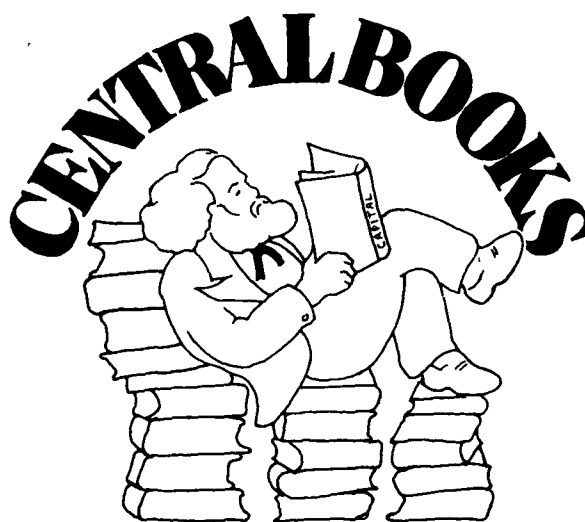
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Reviews

ABOUT PARTY PAMPHLETS: SOCIALISM INTO THE EIGHTIES

Social Security (51pp, £1); **Taxation** (4pp, £1); **Private Schools** (53pp, 60p); **A Future for Public Housing** (72pp, £1), London, The Labour Party, 1981.

The Labour Party is in the doldrums and on the evidence of these pamphlets social planning and policy-making within the party are equally quiescent. This first batch of discussion documents in the series 'Socialism in the 80s' will be disappointing to all those interested not only in the future of the Labour Party but also in the future of the welfare state. Rather than setting out a range of radical possibilities for the next Labour government, and better still the next two or three administrations, as the first stage in establishing detailed social plans and social priorities, the options presented in these documents are restricted for the most part to the familiar Butskellite consensus of the pre-hatcher period and therefore do not represent the radical departure that might have been expected in the current phase of building. Much worse than this failure to establish a framework for planning radical change, however, is the apparent inability of the Labour Party to carry out a critical evaluation of the welfare state and therefore to benefit from the shortcomings in the field of social policy of previous Labour administrations. There is little to suggest, for example, that the analyses of the social policy record of the last two Labour governments contained in the Fabian studies *Labour and Inequality* and *Labour and Quality* have been taken into account, let alone the more radical critiques of the welfare state by Marxists like Gough and Leonard which have been published in recent years.

Criticism tends to be reserved for the public schools and the parasitic nature of the private sector, and there is very little critical material on the state welfare services. The sole exception is the pamphlet on housing

which at least recognises that the Tory victory in 1979 has major implications for the organisation and management of welfare services and not simply for their finances. This is a lesson that must be learned by the whole labour movement and the public sector unions in particular. Many welfare services are characterised by over-centralisation and excessively rigid bureaucracy and are not accountable to clients. However, even the housing document proposes the further growth of 'bureau-professions' with the development of a professional career structure in housing management. Many clients of the social services would provide some suitable comments on the conclusion that 'a major review of (housing policy) is now needed, doing for housing departments what the Seebohm Report did for social services'. Unless a critical evaluation of the welfare state forms the basis for social planning alongside the detailed analysis of poverty and inequality, the social services are not likely to become the vehicles for freedom and welfare that they are widely believed to be, both within and outside the labour movement.

While the Labour Party itself apparently misconstrues the nature of the welfare state in capitalist society, however, there is little hope for radical change. These documents do not suggest that it has attempted or is attempting a close analysis of the failures of the welfare state, or that it has a clear conception of social planning.

In the first place, the discussion of social security, taxation, education and public housing, and the policy options, is based on a liberal view of the welfare state as a countervailing force to the private market through a system of distribution based on wholly different principles, such as need. The survival of massive inequality and poverty over the whole of the postwar period and the fact that the experience of the social services for many of its clients is closer to repression than welfare suggests that this view is quite inadequate. Increased social

expenditure and the expansion of the social services have not necessarily represented progressive increments in the welfare of the working class. This is not to suggest that the welfare state has not contributed to welfare, but that its institutions, like others in capitalist society, contain fundamental contradictions. So the welfare state may on the one hand enhance welfare and on the other, control people. This is familiar enough to Marxists, but unless the Labour Party comes to grips with this contradiction it will not realise the extent of the changes which are necessary in capitalist society to substantially reduce inequality, eradicate poverty and promote welfare. At the moment it is more concerned to defend the hard-won institutions of the welfare state from current attacks and the restoration of Tory cuts, than to raise questions about the nature of those institutions. Thus social policy formation remains circumscribed by existing institutions, including many of those in the private sector, and social planning non-existent.

Secondly, these documents provide no guidelines for social planning or any indica-



tion of social priorities. One indication of this is the separation between the discussion of social security and taxation. The two subjects were considered by separate working parties, and are only linked in the discussion of finance, but it is clear that they must be closely related in any socialist social strategy. So, for example, of the two million people living below the state poverty line about one-third are paying tax. The absence of concerted social planning is also indicated by inconsistencies between the discussion of different welfare institutions. For example, the firm statements of principle on public schools might be contrasted with the prevarication on private pensions. Public schools are a relatively easy target, serving an elite outside of the traditional social services, though relying on state subsidies, but private pensions are now received by about one-half of the workforce. Discussion of the former centres on abolition and the latter only on adjustments to the management of pension funds.

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Thirdly the false division between economic and social policies is maintained throughout these pamphlets. It is assumed that economic policy will raise the revenue for social policy to distribute. Therefore, the social consequences of economic policy are not considered, nor are the economic consequences of social policies. For example the means of taxation are said to be: paying for public services, helping to restructure British industry, creating fair shares and managing the economy. The social aims and effects of taxation are not considered, yet the social security document refers to the overlap between this sector and taxation. More importantly, a strategy which combines economic and social policy and reconstitutes the traditional order of priorities between the two is not developed.

Some of these shortcomings may be illustrated by a brief consideration of the substance of the pamphlets. Social security makes the largest proportion of public expenditure (25%) and provides income to roughly one-quarter of the population. The proportion dependent on supplementary benefit has increased from 3% of the population in 1948 to 8% today, some 4.5 million people. The strategy recommended by the Labour Party to overcome this dependence on degrading means-tested benefits is not new or radical, it is the classic liberal one closely associated with Beveridge. But the Beveridge welfare state is a minimum or subsistence welfare state based on the assumption that there should be a significant come gap between those in and those out of work. The document argues rightly, that this basis must now be rejected' but provides no indication of how this change might be effected. Neither does it address the question of the repressive aspects of social security administration. Administration is treated as a minor issue in the mistaken belief that in essence the system is a healthy one. The level of expenditure is again seen as crucial. Statistics on poverty and inequality are not linked with an analysis of the factors which create poverty and dependency on means-tested benefits and therefore there is no concerted strategy to abolish poverty.

The options for changes in taxation are similarly limited. For example the proposal for a wealth tax suggests levying 1% between £100,000 and £300,000, up to 5% on the top slice above £5 million. A glance at the social security pamphlet reminds us that the single person's pension is £30 a week. The liberal tradition on which policy-making in the Labour Party is currently based is, perhaps, best exemplified by the pamphlet on education which fundamentally underestimates the depth and rigidity

of class inequality in its desire to secure equal access to education. The housing document, the best of the bunch, pays tribute to the proud record of public housing in this country and rejects utterly the Tory future for public housing: a stigmatised ghetto for the poor. But it goes on to suggest that all would be well if the Tory cuts could be restored. This is only partly true: there was much that was wrong with the public housing system prior to 1979. A better starting point for planning a socialist housing policy would have been an appraisal of previous Labour policies. For example, it was the Tories who introduced the so-called tenants' charter, however restricted and incomplete it may be.

These documents are the outcome of discussions within the Labour Party and are clearly aimed more at internal debate and I suspect, particularly at the more conservative parts of the labour movement, than at encouraging public discussion. But we are constantly reminded that the debate in the Labour Party is about policies and not personalities, and on this evidence that debate is not very far advanced.

Alan Walker

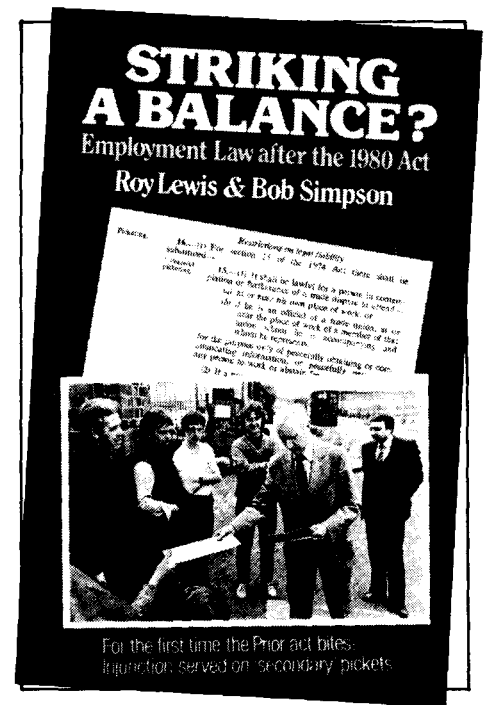
STRIKING A BALANCE? EMPLOYMENT LAW AFTER THE 1980 ACT.

Roy Lewis and Bob Simpson
Martin Robertson. 1981

pbk £4.95, hbk £15.00
ISBN 085529 443 5 pbk

As the era of postwar industrial peace faded out, the first Wilson government started fashioning a big stick for keeping down industrial unrest. It had started its life by repealing the worst of the House of Lords' anti-union judgement in *Rookes v Barnard* and by sugaring the pill of reorganisation and closure with the Redundancy Payments Act — a measure which has amply repaid in workers' acquiescence what it has cost in cash. It finished with *In Place of Strife*, the consultative document which proposed a series of legal fetters on industrial relations and which foundered and sank on massive union opposition.

Two years later the Heath government took office. It brought in the Industrial Relations Act, a combination of a juicy carrot — protection against unfair dismissal — with a series of very big and heavy sticks to weaken and punish trade unions. The negative side of that legislation was fought and defeated by the working class in a series of historic engagements which finally returned a Labour government to power. The second Wilson government first repealed the Indus-



trial Relations Act, re-enacting the employment protection provisions, and then in the Employment Protection Act 1975 building piecemeal upon them.

With the return in 1979 of the Thatcher government the pendulum has again swung back. This lot of Tories have forgotten nothing of their hostility to trade unionism, but they have learned something from their previous efforts at union-bashing. The Employment Act 1980 does not try to incorporate the unions in a grand scheme of registration and regulation. Instead it creates a series of handicaps and disabilities designed to weaken trade union organisation and collective bargaining power.

Roy Lewis and Bob Simpson, both academic commentators with a healthy respect for reality, start and end their commentary on Prior's new Act with a perspective view of it. They correctly locate it as a new means to the old end of improving management's and capital's chances by nobbling the opposition. Ironically, as they note, management in many instances does not want the odds fixed like this. Weak unions mean a multiplicity of organisations with consequent problems for procedure and negotiation; they also make it impossible to strike the sort of bargain which has the union policing its own members to management's great advantage. Instead, and not only metaphorically, real policemen are brought in to do the job with consequences which history has demonstrated often enough.

Lewis and Simpson point out that the new Act does not even live up to the Tory claim to be promoting individual rights. Except where those rights can be promoted at the

expense of union organisation, Prior's Act has cut them down. Unfair dismissal is made harder to prove; maternity rights are hedged about with new restrictions; compensation and guarantee payments are reduced. The whole thrust of the Tory scheme is to back-track on the last decade of employment rights legislation, returning to the employer's hallowed right to hire and fire at will. At the same time it seeks to injure trade union organisation, most flagrantly by outlawing much secondary industrial action, to a degree which is myopic even by the standards of modern Toryism.

The main body of the book is a critical analysis of what the new Act is doing and why. Because of its depth it is not a handbook, but it is important reading for trade unionists because there is more on the way. The Green Paper on *Trade Union Immunities* is to be followed this year by a Bill introduced by Tebbit: you can get a concise and alarming preview of it in LRD's recent pamphlet *The New Tory Attack on Trade Union Rights* (40p). And after that the Tories are planning more legislation to regulate the workings of trade unions internally. The end product, if they get away with it, will be far more retrograde and crippling than the Industrial Relations Act ever was.

Stephen Sedley

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**WOMEN'S OPPRESSION TODAY:
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Michèle Barrett

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Some years ago, in a celebrated essay, the American feminist Gayle Rubin argued the need for a 'political economy of sex'; that is to say, a materialist account of sexuality and gender division comparable with the Marxist analysis of production relations but not reducible to it.

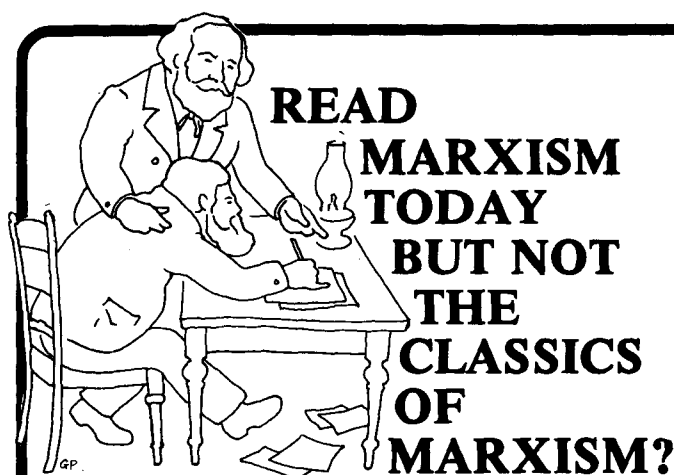
I believe this remains a project of fundamental importance for feminism. The social processes of sexuality and the sexual division of labour are crucial in generating the systematic subordination of women *as women* to men *as men* which is at the heart of feminist theoretical and political concern, the so-called 'feminist problematic'.

It is the intersection of this subordination

with the class relations into which they enter which determines the form of women's oppression in class society. We can derive one from the other; tracing the link a major task of Marxist feminism.

These two stimulating books are part of an increasingly confident body of work on the themes which forms an important achievement of the women's liberation movement. The Cambridge book comes directly out of the women's studies course run at that university since 1973. The authorities, who do not think women a proper object of academic study, starved the course of funding. The feminists cheerfully responded by tearing up the established subject divisions and starting from scratch; so that what we have here is an innovative, interdisciplinary reader. Its high overall standard testifies to the quality of course discussion over the years.

The first of the book's four sections contains essays on the family and wage labour under capitalism. Engels' prediction that women's inequality in marriage would quickly disappear once they entered wage labour on equal terms with men proved doubly wrong. Far from vanishing, the sexual division of labour in the family proved its tenacity and autonomy by dictating the emergence of a parallel sexual division



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n in the labour force itself. This in turn reinforced women's domestic dependence. How and why this occurred has long preoccupied feminists, and these essays reflect the substantial work which is being done in this field.

This is the 'safe' area of feminist theory, which is not to deny its importance. The following sections carry us into the quicklands of sexuality, coercion and violence against women. The emphasis here and throughout the book is on the 'return to the real' as a source of understanding.

Exemplary in this respect is a chilling account of the death in an Indian village of a young married woman who stepped out of line, written up collectively from the field notes of Ros Morpeth. As the tale unfolds with a terrible inevitability, events are constantly related to that society's expectations of women, the institutional basis of marriage and the structural features militating against female solidarity. It is surely no coincidence that this most thought-provoking piece is the only one to look outside the confines of our own society.

L J Jordanova gives a lucid and very fair account of different approaches to mental illness, emphasising the need to confront directly how much suffering is involved: no approach is adequate which does not give it some meaning and offer the possibility of relieving it.

My quarrel with this part of the book is that sexuality is not approached directly or critically enough. Jane Caplan gives a convincing account of the emergence of 'homosexuality' as a category and social role that herself questions its relevance to women. Discussion of abortion should be the occasion for scrutinising our assumptions about sexuality, but as is so often the case, here it is not. We desperately need to study the creation and meaning of desire and sexual practices, but we seem to find it very hard to do so.

The final section takes up some basic theoretical and methodological questions, all with great clarity. In particular, the idea that there is something 'natural' about gender division is torn to shreds: compulsory reading, this, for anyone who still believes that because women bear children, they must so rear them on their own, service men in the home and take rotten jobs.

All in all, an excellent, extremely accessible book, and highly recommended.

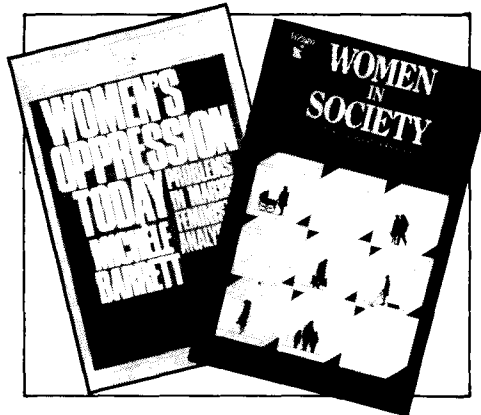
Michèle Barrett's book by now needs neither introduction nor recommendation. It is an indispensable survey of current debates, broad in scope, clear-headed and fair. Its thoroughness makes it an admirable introduction for those newly considering these

questions, but there is much for anyone to engage with.

I recommend in particular Michèle's discussion of ideology, which will repay very careful reading, and her chapter on the family. We must look forward to her forthcoming book on this subject written with Mary McIntosh whose ideas have strongly influenced the present book.

The book's basic premise is that women's oppression cannot be fully accounted for in Marxist terms. Every chapter stresses that there is no *logical* reason why the division of labour under capitalism should be organised on the basis of gender (in other words, through the sexual division of labour), for the capital/labour contradiction is 'sex-blind'. And yet we see that in fact the sexual division of labour is central to capitalist production relations.

Michèle therefore seeks to unravel the complexities of gender and relate them to the historical development of capitalist production. The integration of the historical



and the theoretical is a key element in the book. It is Michèle's thesis that, through the process of historical struggle between the classes but also between men and women, gender relations have become embedded in production relations to such an extent that capitalist production relations now form the material basis of the oppression of women, which no longer has independent material determinants.

The arguments Michèle uses to justify this position are fascinating, but I have to say at once that I do not agree with it. It is indeed the case that gender is now crucial to capitalist production relations, but the reverse is not true: we cannot account for the totality of women's oppression in this way. How can the material basis of sexuality — of desire and fantasy as well as sexual practice — be found in production relations however extensively mediated? Or does the erotic have no material determinants?

I have already suggested that women's oppression involves the intersection of two sets of relations: relations of subordination

to men and relations of exploitation by capital. Surely the material basis of women's subordination is to be found not in capitalist production relations but where feminists have always expected to find it, in the structures of marriage, kinship and sexuality?

If we give the name 'patriarchy' to all those material and ideological forces which perpetrate women's subordination, then we are in a position to ask with some precision what is the relationship at any given time and place of capitalism and patriarchy; in other words, what are the general conditions for the liberation of women?

Michèle rejects patriarchy as an ahistorical concept. I am not sure that this matters: could we not say the same of class? Does it not depend on how we use it?

These arguments apart, what is it feminists actually *want*? Michèle identifies three main areas where fundamental change is required, and goes on to ask whether they might be achieved under capitalism (her conclusion, with which I agree, is no). Firstly, the sharing of childcare by men (not only to reduce the burden on women but even more importantly to break down gender divisions). Secondly, the abolition of the family wage (which posits a male breadwinner with dependent wife and children and directly militates against the achievement of equal pay). Finally, 'the transformation of the ideology of gender'.

I do not share Michèle's faith that the reorganisation of childcare would of itself lead to a radical restructuring of gender relations. It is characteristic of this work that it is performed by women on terms dictated by men. Men's greater participation is hardly likely to lessen their control, desirable though it may be on other grounds. The women's movement is just beginning to tackle this contradiction.

The book's final question is the inevitable one, why should socialist men support the aims of feminism when they have so much to lose? The conventional answer is that it is in their interests to do so. This will be mere sophistry until women are so strong that it becomes politically impossible for men to build socialism on our backs. Nor can I accept Michèle's extraordinary statement that a socialism without feminism is inconceivable, because I can see that it actually exists.

Perhaps self-interest is not a proper basis for political commitment anyway. I suspect that the appeal of both socialism and feminism is ultimately a moral one, and our politics should emphasise this and the importance of individual responsibility and choice.

Gaby Charing

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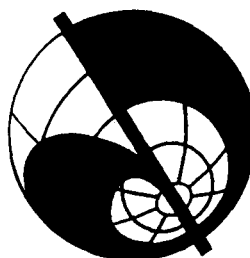
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NOTES

ARX MEMORIAL LECTURE

drew Davies writes: This year's Marx Memorial Lecture is to be given by Tony Benn on 'Democracy and Marxism: A Mutual Challenge' at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square on Tuesday 16 March, 1982 at 8.0pm. The subject of the lecture is particularly relevant in view of recent events in Ireland and the widespread employment of the term 'Marxist' as a form of generalised abuse, an attempt to characterise Marxism somehow 'alien' to this country. And this despite the fact that Marx himself lived and worked here for many years. With the centenary of Marx's death coming up in 1983, it is a high time that the role of Marxism in the British labour movement is discussed and Tony Benn's lecture will be a valuable contribution to this process.

BIRMINGHAM WLM FAIR

John Woddis writes: Our fingers froze as we handed out leaflets advertising the first ever Birmingham Women's Liberation Fair to pre-Christmas shoppers in the city-centre, and, despite the cold, nearly a thousand people made their way to this long worked-for event.

At it they found dozens of stalls and dis-

plays showing the wide range of activities of the Women's Liberation Movement: arts and crafts; literature and exhibitions from women in the trade union movement and political parties; there were entertainments including musicians and poets, photography and video projects, and the refreshments room did a roaring trade. For the children there was a creche (the only thing run by men) and a collage-making session organised by the WLM playgroup.

The idea for the Fair had come up at a meeting of WLM activists last summer, and was a determined attempt to build on the achievements and experiences of the Birmingham WLM in the People's March for Jobs and in organising the conference 'Against the Cuts: A Feminist Strategy for the 80s'. The two main points which had emerged from these events were the need for the WLM to put forward a public face, and to make links with other movements, notably trade unions.

So the Fair was conceived to present the demands of the WLM as a whole, and to draw on support from as many quarters as possible. We wrote to all the trade unions in the city, all community groups and non-WLM organisations, as well as political par-

ties. The response was most encouraging — nearly 15,000 leaflets and hundreds of posters went out — through trade unions, public libraries and adult education centres as well as the WLM itself.

One of the great strengths of the Fair is that the group that organised it covered almost every trend within the WLM: socialist feminist and radical feminists, women active in the trade union movement and in the community, long-standing feminists and women new to the movement. But perhaps the surest sign of the Fair's success is that all of us who organised it are now eager to make it an annual event. By the time this appears in print we'll have begun planning for 1982!

AES SEMINAR

Peter Samson writes: The international aspects of the alternative economic strategy give rise to many difficult problems that need to be tackled urgently. Import controls and withdrawal from the EEC have so far received the most attention, but there are many others, for a sustained expansion of the British economy will require a transformation of our trading and financial relations with other countries. The Economic Advisory Committee of the Communist Party is

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holding a residential seminar on 'Britain in the International Economy' from Friday April 16 (supper) to Sunday April 18, at Beechwood College, Leeds. On Saturday the subject will be 'International Economic Policy Aspects of the AES' opened by Dave Currie, with additional material on the EEC, Japan, West Germany, East-West trade and the Third World. On Sunday Ben Fine will open on multinational companies and the AES, while other participants will analyse multinationals and particular industries, including motors, food, textiles and telecommunications. The inclusive fee is £35; please write to: Peter Samson, Secretary Economic Advisory Committee, 16 St John Street, London EC1 4AY.

NATIONAL FUND

Roger Trask writes: The Communist Party's single biggest source of income is the annual National Fund Appeal. This year the target is £85,000 and the Appeal runs from 22 February to 28 March. The income from the Appeal helps to finance the national work of the Communist Party: its paid workers, leaflets, conferences, pamphlets, the fortnightly *Comment* and, of course, *Marxism Today*.

The target is raised through a diverse range of activities, of which the great majority are organised at a local level. An important component is individual donations. We would be very grateful if readers of *Marxism Today* would make a contribution towards this year's Appeal. Send donations to Gordon McLennan, National Fund, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AL.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND HOW TO CONTROL THEM

Shelley Adams writes: Next time an employer

argues that employees are 'contractually obliged' to do something, he or she could be in for a shock — at least if the employees have read this new Labour Research Department booklet on terms of employment. Unlike most law guides it is not about how the law works in tribunals and courts — in fact it starts off with five good reasons for avoiding the courts. It is about dealing with legal arguments *in negotiations* — since that is where most disputes are settled.

It aims to answer the sort of everyday enquiries received by the LRD from affiliates about their terms of employment; to explain not just what the law says — but how to argue with the law. The booklet looks at three things: the different sources of employment terms (collective agreements, judge-made rules, custom and practice); how to argue about conflicting terms; how to control terms of employment.

Terms of Employment and How to Control Them aims to shatter some of the myths about the law; it shows that, when it comes to employment terms there are very few hard and fast rules and it has plenty of case histories to prove it. In addition, the booklet contains a detailed chapter on how unions can control the different sources of employment terms — so that when it comes to arguing about them they can make sure that the legal odds are weighted a bit more in their favour.

64 pages in length, the booklet costs £1.10 (including postage) and is available from: Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF.

ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE

Norma Manchee writes: The daily incursions and attacks by the South African régime against its newly independent neighbours have received scant attention in the media here. Two pamphlets published by the Campaign to Stop the War Against Angola and Mozambique highlight these violations which have been carried out over a number of years. The first, by British barrister Lord Gifford, chronicles the abduction and murder of South African and Namibian patriots who have fled to seek refuge in the front line states, while in the second Jan Marsh meticulously documents the frequency of the military incursions by the South Africans during the last six years. Since British Buccaneer bombers and other British military equipment were used in the attacks against the Angolan people, it is all the more imperative that we acquaint ourselves with the facts in order to help end this shameful collaboration.

South Africa's Record of International Terrorism by Tony Gifford costs 40p; *Stop the*



War Against Angola and Mozambique by Jan Marsh costs 75p; both are available, price free, from: The Campaign to Stop the War Against Angola and Mozambique, 9 Grosvenor Street, London WC1.

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy as early as possible.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Eileen Phillips works at the City of London Polytechnic.

Roderick Floud is Professor of History Birkbeck College, London University.

Peter Avis is the editor of the ACTI journal.

Andrew Gamble is a lecturer in Politics Sheffield University.

Beatrix Campbell works on *City Limits*.

Ron Smith is co-author of *The Economics Militarism* (forthcoming).

Mick Kelly and **Jean Palutikof** work the Climatic Research Unit at East Angles University.

Mario Nuti is Professor of Political Economy at Birmingham University and has written widely on Polish affairs.

Margaret Tarratt works in publishing.

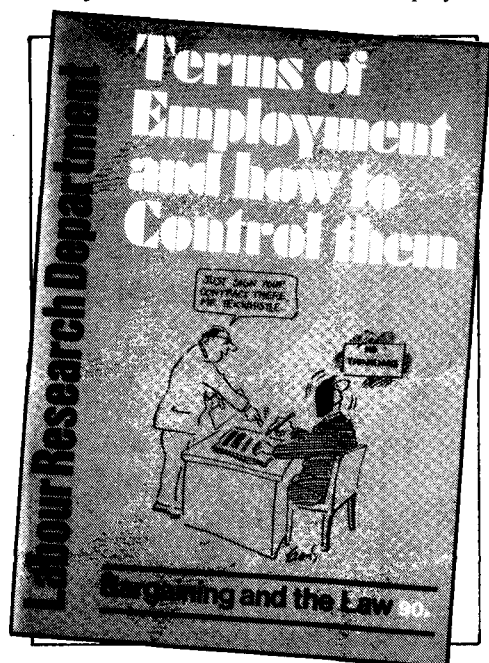
Justin Wren-Lewis works at the Centre for Criminological and Socio-Legal Studies Sheffield University.

Peter Smith is a freelance journalist.

Dafydd Elis Thomas is MP for Merioneth.

Gaby Charing is a solicitor.

Alan Walker is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Sheffield University.



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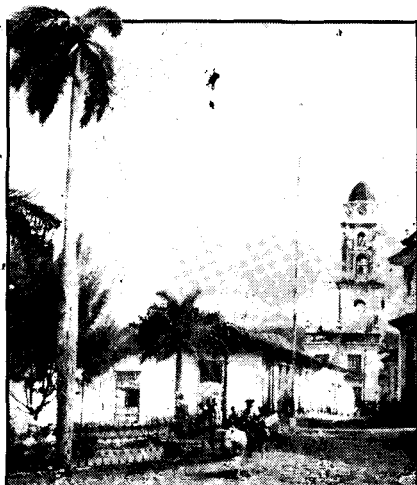
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